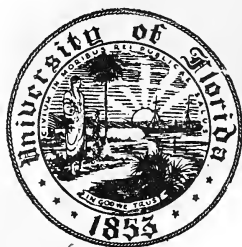
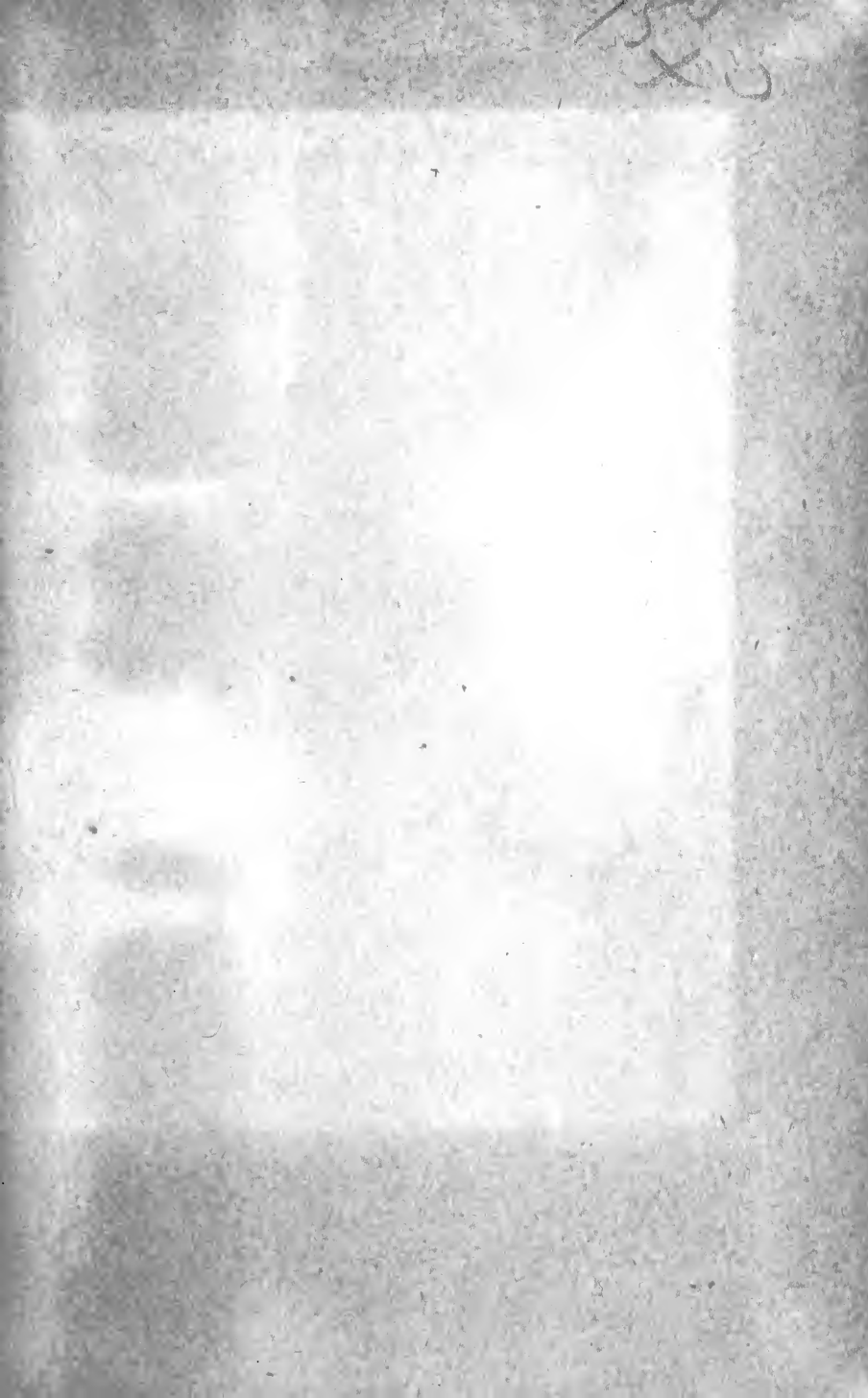


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*A Brief Anthology of*

# POETRY

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AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

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## LETTER TO THE TEACHER

THIS SMALL COLLECTION OF POEMS IS ADDRESSED primarily to those students who have had comparatively little experience in the reading of poetry. The notes and questions following the poems have purposely been kept brief and simple, from a double motive: first, the feeling that an elaborate apparatus alarms the student and makes him feel that he is being led into a mystery which he will never be able completely to comprehend; second, the belief that no textbook should attempt to take the classroom teacher's place. Thus, while the general form of ballads and of sonnets is discussed, the technical descriptions for feet and lines have been omitted. In courses where the formal structure of poetry is emphasized, such material can most easily be furnished and demonstrated by the teacher.

The questions are not intended to be exhaustive or to force discussion of a poem into a single channel. The poems themselves have been selected to furnish examples of the different moods of poetry in a variety of forms. Since, as stated above, the readers of this book will probably have had no more experience of poetry than the average high school

furnishes at the present time, no attempt has been made to include examples of the "extreme" styles; the emphasis is upon the traditional manner. Nevertheless a few poems point toward further explorations of the difficult question of style—but that, again, is business for the classroom.

## WHAT POETRY DOES

POETRY HAS PROVED TO BE ONE OF THE LASTING delights of humankind. Probably there has never been any great number of first-rate poets all alive at the same time; but one of the surest ways for the individual to be remembered by the generations following him has been to write great poetry. Even if posterity cannot decide for certain whether the poet existed as an individual, as scholars are still uncertain about Homer, the poetry is read, taught, and discussed. In any list of the world's great books, the proportion of poetry is high. Obviously, then, poetry has been of tremendous assistance to the countless generations of our ancestors, whether they were using it to tell stories, to sum up history, or simply to give advice.

In the present time, when we regularly test everything that comes to our attention by asking of what use it is, it is easy to overlook the continuing uses of poetry and to forget its continuing value. If a man refuses to admit that there is any "real" value in anything which will not force him to pay a heavier income tax at the end of the following twelve months, there is little that anyone can do to convince him. Such a man's education is clearly some-

thing to live *on*, rather than *with*, and any time which he may put in on the study of poetry (aside from a short course in the writing of radio advertising jingles) is wasted. But what can poetry contribute for the average man, whose sense of values is less exclusive and perhaps less narrowly certain? The answer, an old one, is so common that it is often overlooked: understanding and pleasure.

How does poetry contribute to understanding? The man who tries to versify the directions for setting up a summer camp in the woods is not writing poetry at all; he is writing a puzzle, complicating something so that other people may disentangle it. The manufacturer of cake flour who hires a man to turn all the recipes on the side of the box into rhyme is wasting his own money and the housewife's time. It is a different sort of understanding that should come from reading poetry, a sharper and clearer understanding of our own and other people's experience. Sometimes what the poet does for us is to make us see freshly and exactly the different parts of our own past, things which we ourselves have done and have lived through. Sometimes—and this is more frequent—his experience has only partly overlapped ours, and he is introducing us to kinds of life and feeling which we have only partly shared or perhaps not shared at all. If he is a



good poet, he can overcome the barrier of our not knowing fully the feeling he is trying to convey to us, and he can make us feel with him, sympathize, in spite of ourselves. As the range of our experience in poetry grows, so does our range of sympathy and understanding. Actually, of course, some of us have never experienced outside of poetry some of the more violent emotions. Except in wartime, for example, the feeling of hand-to-hand battle to the death is limited pretty much to literature, to such poems as the old ballad of "Chevy Chase," with its account of the bloody bickering on the border between England and Scotland.

More often, however, the poet is making sharper and clearer the emotions which we *have* experienced. Almost everyone has felt the unhappiness of separation from someone he loves, but few people have ever been able to crystalize their feelings into so sharp and exact a statement as that of the anonymous sixteenth-century poet whose four-line stanza, along with a number of other poems, was found in an old manuscript in a library:

*Western Wind, when will thou blow?  
 The small rain down can rain,—  
 Christ, if my love were in my arms  
 And I in my bed again!*

Who was he? Some sailor standing on the deck of a ship in the Irish Sea (he's asking for a western wind)? One of the first adventurers to seek the new world with Sir Walter Raleigh? We don't know, but what he says has been understood by hundreds of men who have read his poem, and many of them have understood their own emotions the better for having seen their feelings expressed in this way. It is an understanding of human nature, one's own and other people's, rather than an understanding of mechanical processes like building a summer camp or putting together a pie, that comes from poetry.

There are millions of people in the world, and no two of them, according to scientific studies, are exactly alike. It would be more difficult to prove that no two people feel exactly the same way or have absolutely identical emotions. Whether that is true or not, there seems to be at least some common ground in the feelings we have toward poetry, in the pleasure we experience from it. The pleasure we feel is a pleasure of the mind, sometimes from the ingenuity required to follow the complex statement of an emotion as it is being separated from and sharpened away from similar emotions, sometimes from the following of a story as it is told in a relatively simple swinging rhythm. But the pleasure is mental; it is not the sort that a cat feels in having

its back rubbed or in the happy expectation of liver in a dish on the kitchen floor.

This mental pleasure, this way of feeling pleasure, may be extremely varied. At different times there have been different fashions in poetry, and at any one time there have been differences of opinion about poetry. Sometimes people have preferred their poetry to be very formal, with rhymes recurring at very definite intervals and with rhythms handled very exactly and altering only according to fixed rules within narrow limits. At other times, the greatest freedom on the part of the poet has been approved by poetry readers, who have been willing to consider any rhythmic set of words as poetry so long as it was clear that both pleasure to the human mind and understanding of human nature were presented.

One of the chief differences between poetry and prose is in the demands which the two make upon the reading habits of the individual. In prose—the kind of prose you are now looking at or the sort you may reasonably expect to find in any other textbook designed to convey information—the rhythm of the words is not apt to be strongly marked, nor are you greatly concerned with it as a source of pleasure. On the other hand, if the prose is especially awkward, you may complain that it has no rhythm.

Perhaps you are accustomed to making a swift calculation before you begin to read, in order to decide how much time a certain number of pages will take you if all goes well and there are no interruptions. In the reading of poetry, such calculations do not hold up and are beside the point anyway. In all attempts to fix your speed of reading, you are judging by the amount of information you can retain and can later reproduce in recognizable form, such as information about, say, genes and chromosomes, about the tensile strength of metals, about the differences between poetry and prose. But in reading poetry you are dealing with something the really important qualities of which cannot be reproduced in a paraphrase or a restatement, because not only the matter but the manner is important. The object of the reading is pleasure as well as understanding, and, as has already been mentioned, the kind of understanding we get from poetry is not the same as that we get from such factual items as those mentioned above.

The pleasure is there in the poem for the reader to get it, provided both poet and reader have done their separate jobs. Naturally, the reader may always object that, so far as he personally is concerned, the poet—Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, or the man whose work serves as filler at the bottom of

today's editorial page—has failed to do his share of the work properly and that for this one reader, at any rate, the work is not a success. In reply, it is always fair to admit that Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth wrote poetry of varying merit, some parts of it being better than other parts, but to point out also that the average reader who is not a specialist in literature or who has not formed a definite and conscious taste through long reading had better be wary of assuming that he has met the inferior poetry of a great man or that all the generations of readers between himself and the poet are mistaken. ("They're all out of step but me!") With new poetry, work which has not appeared before or whose author has not as yet gained special reputation, we should be prepared to meet the author at least halfway. Meeting new authors halfway should be easy rather than difficult because with a contemporary writer there will generally be fewer difficulties of language and idiom to master.

The two objections most frequently heard when the reading of poetry is discussed completely contradict each other. Poetry is said to be either "kid stuff" or "too deep for me." Oddly enough, the same man may make both objections, one right after the other. In the first instance he is remembering the Mother Goose rhymes he learned as a child, the

counting-out rhymes by which it was decided which children on the block would be cops and which would be robbers. With a swift contempt for his own past, he dismisses poetry as no fit concern for a mature mind, such as his has now become. When he is reminded of Shakespeare, of Milton, and of Chaucer, he replies that poetry is too deep for him. What is the answer? Probably it is that he never made a serious attempt to read poetry carefully for himself. The verses he had to memorize in high school had always seemed either clearly false ("Stone walls do not a prison make") or dully moralizing ("This above all, to thine own self be true"). If he were to approach the same poems as an adult, bringing to them the mature mind which he now feels he possesses, he would find that the first of these poems is not dealing in falsehoods and that the second is an excerpt from a play, where it is spoken by a man who is presented as a rather dull old codger. In one case, the fault was the reader's own youth; in the second, the way in which the matter was presented to him originally.

For an example, it is worth looking more closely at the first line, quoted above, from Richard Lovelace's poem "To Althea, from Prison":

When Love with unconfinèd wings  
 Hovers within my gates,  
 And my divine Althea brings  
 To whisper at the grates;  
 When I lie tangled in her hair  
 And fettered to her eye,  
 The birds that wanton in the air  
 Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round,  
 With no allaying Thames,  
 Our careless heads with roses bound,  
 Our hearts with loyal flames;  
 When thirsty grief in wine we steep,  
 When healths and draughts go free,  
 Fishes that tipple in the deep  
 Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I  
 With shriller throat shall sing  
 The sweetness, mercy, majesty,  
 And glories of my king;  
 When I shall voice aloud how good  
 He is, how great should be,  
 Enlarged winds that curl the flood  
 Know no such liberty.

*Stone walls do not a prison make,  
 Nor iron bars a cage:  
 Minds innocent and quiet take  
 That for an hermitage.  
 If I have freedom in my love,  
 And in my soul am free,  
 Angels alone, that soar above,  
 Enjoy such liberty.*

Now the line quoted looks a little different. It is a little more difficult to pronounce it clearly false when it appears as part of the larger pattern. The poet has taken a serious subject and has found a light tone in which to treat it. The famous lines at the beginning of the final stanza are built up to, arranged for; when they appear, they are understandable. The first stanza is the conventional protest that being in love is no hardship, but the poet has found various figures of speech to make the situation more vivid and to prepare us, by the language he chooses, for what is to come. His love holds him prisoner; he is "tangled in her hair and fettered to her eye," and nevertheless he feels free and happy. He speaks of her coming to the "grates," presumably those of the prison mentioned in the title, but he is more concerned with Althea than with jail. He passes from love to liquor in the next



stanza, a different sort of freedom, which he can treat in a poem of so playful a tone; then he carries us back to a more serious note with loyalty to his king. Finally, after having spoken of love, liquor, and loyalty, and having proved to his own poetical satisfaction that they are the tests of liberty, he states his climax, the paradox that, no matter where he is, he does not feel like a prisoner, and therefore "Stone walls do not a prison make." In case we had lost connection with the previous stanzas, he sums up his argument once more with a reference to stanzas one and three: "If I have freedom in my love, And in my soul am free." We may note with some amusement that the second stanza has already served its full purpose in keeping the tone light, and that therefore he does not bring up the argument of freedom in wine a second time.

There are other ways of looking at the same poem, and there are other judgments of it which might be arrived at fairly. However, it should be clear that a poem is to be judged as a whole, by as much of the poet's intention as an intelligent reader can make out, and ought not to be judged simply by a couple of lines which are lifted out of their context and made to seem too high-flown for general consumption.

When a reader looks at a poem, he owes the au-

thor a certain amount of attention and intelligence. If he cannot bring a reasonable amount of both to his reading, he himself is at fault and should hardly complain of the poet's obscurity.

The poems in this book are arranged roughly within each section in the order of their difficulty, with the idea that the average reader who reads the first poems of each section attentively and intelligently should have no great difficulty with those that follow.

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# ADVENTURE





## SIR PATRICK SPENS

Anonymous

*The king sits in Dumferling toune,  
 Drinking the blude-reid wine:  
 "O whar will I get guid sailor,  
 To sail this schip of mine?"*

*Up and spake an eldern knight,* 5  
*Sat at the kings richt kne:  
 "Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor  
 That sails upon the se."*

*The king has written a braid letter  
 And signd it wi his hand,* 10  
*And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,  
 Was walking on the sand.*

*The first line that Sir Patrick red,  
 A loud lauch lauched he;  
 The next line that Sir Patrick red,* 15  
*The teir blinded his ee.*

*"O wha has don this ill deid,  
 This ill deid don to me,*

*To send me out this time o' the yeir,  
To sail upon the sel* 20

*"Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,  
Our guid schip sails the morne."*

*"O say na sae, my master deir,  
For I feir a deadlie storm."*

*"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,  
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,  
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,  
That we will cum to harme."* 25

*O our Scots nobles wer richt laith  
To weet their cork-heild schoone;  
Bot lang owre a' the pláy were playd,  
Thair hats they swam aboone.* 30

*O lang, lang may the ladies stand,  
Wi thair gold kems in thair hair,  
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,  
For they'll se thame na mair.* 35

*Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,  
It's fiftie fadom deip,  
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,  
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.* 40

## THE GRIESLY WIFE

John Manifold

*"Lie still, my newly married wife,  
Lie easy as you can.  
You're young and ill accustomed yet  
To sleeping with a man."*

*The snow lay thick, the moon was full* 5  
*And shone across the floor.*  
*The young wife went with never a word*  
*Barefooted to the door.*

*He up and followed sure and fast,*  
*The moon shone clear and white.* 10  
*But before his coat was on his back*  
*His wife was out of sight.*

*He trod the trail wherever it turned*  
*By many a mound and scree,*  
*And still the barefoot track led on,* 15  
*And an angry man was he.*

*He followed fast, he followed slow,*  
*And still he called her name,*

*And only the dingoes of the hills  
Yowled back at him again.*

20

*His hair stood up along his neck,  
His angry mind was gone,  
For the track of the two bare feet gave out  
And a four-foot track went on.*

*Her night-gown lay upon the snow  
As it might upon the sheet,  
But the track that led from where it lay  
Was never of human feet.*

25

*His heart turned over in his chest,  
He looked from side to side,  
And he thought more of his gumwood fire  
Than he did of his griesly bride.*

30

*And first he started walking back  
And then began to run,  
And his quarry wheeled at the end of her track  
And hunted him in turn.*

35

*Oh, long the fire may burn for him  
And open stand the door,  
And long the bed may wait empty:  
He'll not be back any more.*

40

# THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

William Morris

*Had she come all the way for this,  
To part at last without a kiss?  
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain  
That her own eyes might see him slain  
Beside the haystack in the floods?* 5

*Along the dripping, leafless woods,  
The stirrup touching either shoe,  
She rode astride as troopers do;  
With kirtle kilted to her knee,  
To which the mud splashed wretchedly; 10  
And the wet dripped from every tree  
Upon her head and heavy hair,  
And on her eyelids broad and fair;  
The tears and rain ran down her face.*

*By fits and starts they rode apace, 15  
And very often was his place  
Far off from her; he had to ride  
Ahead, to see what might betide  
When the roads crossed; and sometimes, when  
There rose a murmuring from his men, 20*

Had to turn back with promises.  
 Ah me! she had but little ease;  
 And often for pure doubt and dread  
 She sobbed, made giddy in the head  
 By the swift riding; while for cold, 25  
 Her slender fingers scarce could hold  
 The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,  
 She felt the foot within her shoe  
 Against the stirrup; all for this,  
 To part at last without a kiss 30  
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked hay,  
 They saw across the only way  
 That Judas, Godmar, and the three  
 Red running lions dismally 35  
 Grinned from his pennon, under which  
 In one straight line along the ditch,  
 They counted thirty heads.

So then  
 While Robert turned round to his men,  
 She saw at once the wretched end, 40  
 And, stooping down, tried hard to rend  
 Her coif the wrong way from her head,  
 And hid her eyes; while Robert said,  
 "Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;

At Poitiers where we made them run 45  
 So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,  
 The Gascon frontier is so near,  
 Naught after us."

But "O!" she said,  
 "My God! my God! I have to tread  
 The long way back without you; then 50  
 The court at Paris; those six men;  
 The gratings of the Chatelet;  
 The swift Seine on some rainy day  
 Like this, and people standing by,  
 And laughing, while my weak hands try 55  
 To recollect how strong men swim.  
 All this, or else a life with him,  
 For which I should be damned at last;  
 Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry, 60  
 "St. George for Marny!" cheerily;  
 And laid his hand upon her rein.  
 Alas! no man of all his train  
 Gave back that cheery cry again;  
 And while for rage his thumb beat fast 65  
 Upon his sword-hilt, someone cast  
 About his neck a kerchief long,  
 And bound him.

Then they went along  
 To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,  
 Your lover's life is on the wane 70  
 So fast, that, if this very hour  
 You yield not as my paramour,  
 He will not see the rain leave off;  
 Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,  
 Sir Robert, or I slay you now." 75

She laid her hand upon her brow,  
 Then gazed upon the palm, as though  
 She thought her forehead bled, and "No!"  
 She said, and turned her head away,  
 As there was nothing else to say, 80  
 And everything was settled; red  
 Grew Godmar's face from chin to head—  
 "Jehane, on yonder hill there stands  
 My castle, guarding well my lands;  
 What hinders me from taking you, 85  
 And doing what I list to do  
 To your fair willful body, while  
 Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile  
 Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,  
 A long way out she thrust her chin: 90  
 "You know that I should strangle you



While you were sleeping; or bite through  
 Your throat, by God's help; ah!" she said,  
 "Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!  
 For in such wise they hem me in,  
 I cannot choose but sin and sin,  
 Whatever happens; yet I think  
 They could not make me eat or drink,  
 And so should I just reach my rest."

95

"Nay, if you do not my behest,  
 O Jehane! though I love you well,"  
 Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell  
 All that I know?" "Foul lies," she said.

100

"Eh? lies, my Jehane? by God's head,  
 At Paris folks would deem them true!  
 Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:  
 'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!  
 Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'

105

Eh! —gag me Robert!— sweet my friend,  
 This were indeed a piteous end  
 For those long fingers and long feet,  
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;  
 An end that few men would forget  
 That saw it. So, an hour yet—  
 Consider, Jehane, which to take  
 Of life or death!"

110

115

So, scarce awake,  
 Dismounting, did she leave that place,  
 And totter some yards; with her face  
 Turned upward to the sky she lay,  
 Her head on a wet heap of hay, 120  
 And fell asleep; and while she slept,  
 And did not dream, the minutes crept  
 Round to the twelve again; but she,  
 Being waked at last, sighed quietly,  
 And strangely childlike came, and said: 125  
 "I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,  
 As though it hung on strong wires, turned  
 Most sharply round, and his face burned.

For Robert, both his eyes were dry—  
 He could not weep—but gloomily 130  
 He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,  
 His lips were firm; he tried once more  
 To touch her lips; she reached out, sore  
 And vain desire so tortured them,  
 The poor gray lips, and now the hem 135  
 Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start  
 Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;  
 From Robert's throat he loosed the bands  
 Of silk and mail; with empty hands

Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw, 140  
 The long bright blade without a flaw  
 Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand  
 In Robert's hair; she saw him bend  
 Back Robert's head; she saw him send  
 The thin steel down; the blow told well— 145  
 Right backward the knight Robert fell,  
 And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,  
 Unwitting, as I deem; so then  
 Godmar turned grinning to his men,  
 Who ran, some five or six, and beat 150  
 His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turned again and said:  
 "So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!  
 Take note, my lady that your way  
 Lies backward to the Chatelet!" 155  
 She shook her head and gazed awhile  
 At her cold hands with a rueful smile,  
 As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had  
 Beside the haystack in the floods. 160

## from THE PRELUDE

William Wordsworth

One summer evening (led by her) I found  
 A little boat tied to a willow tree  
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.  
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in  
 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth      5  
 And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice  
 Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;  
 Leaving behind her still, on either side,  
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,  
 Until they melted all into one track      10  
 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,  
 Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point  
 With an unswerving line, I fixed my view  
 Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,  
 The horizon's utmost boundary; for above      15  
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.  
 She was an elfin pinnace; lustily  
 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,  
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat  
 Went heaving through the water like a swan;      20  
 When, from behind that craggy steep till then  
 The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,  
 As if with voluntary power instinct

Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,  
And growing still in stature the grim shape      25  
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,  
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own  
And measured motion like a living thing,  
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,  
And through the silent water stole my way      30  
Back to the covert of the willow tree;  
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—  
And through the meadows homeward went in grave  
And serious mood; but after I had seen  
That spectacle, for many days, my brain      35  
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense  
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts  
There hung a darkness, call it solitude  
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes  
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,      40  
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;  
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live  
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind  
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

## FIRST TRAVELS OF MAX

John Crowe Ransom

*As hath been, lo, these many generations,  
 The best of the Van Vroomans was the youngest;  
 And even he, in a chevroned sailor's blouse  
 And tawny curls far from subdued to the cap,  
 Had slapped old Katie and betaken himself 5  
 From games for children. That was because they  
 told  
 Him never, never to set a wicked foot  
 Into Fool's Forest, where the devil dwelt.*

*"Become Saint Michael's Sword!" said Max to the  
 stick,  
 And to the stone, "Be a brand-new revolver!" 10  
 Then Max was glad that he had armed so wisely,  
 As darker grew the wood, and shrill with silence.  
 All good fairies were helpless here; at night  
 Whipped in an inch of their lives; weeping, for-  
 bidden  
 To play with strange scared truant little boys 15  
 Who didn't belong there. Snakes were allowed there  
 And lizards and adders—people of age and evil  
 That lay on their bellies and whispered—no bird nor  
 rabbit.*

*There were more rotten trees than there were sound  
ones;*

*In that wood, timber was degenerate 20  
And rotted almost faster than it grew.*

*There were no flowers nor apples; too much age.  
The only innocent thing in there was Max,  
And even he had cursed his little sisters.*

*The little black tarn rose up almost in his face— 25*

*It was as black and sudden as the pit*

*The Adversary digs in the bowels of earth;*

*Bubbles were on it, breath of the black beast*

*(Formed like a spider, white bag for entrails)*

*Who took that sort of blackness to inhabit 30*

*And dangle after bad men in Fool's Forest.*

*"Must they be bad?" said casuistical Max.*

*"Mightn't a good boy who stopped saying his pray-  
ers*

*Be allowed to slip into the spider's fingers?"*

*Max raised his sword—but what can swords do 35*

*Against the Prince of the Dark? Max sheathed his  
point*

*And crept around the pool.*

*In the middle of the wood was a Red Witch.*

*Max half expected her. He never expected*

*To find a witch's house so dirty and foolish, 40*

*A witch with a wide bosom yellow as butter,  
 Or a witch combing so many obscene things  
 From her black hair into her scarlet lap.  
 He never believed there would attempt to sing  
 The one that taught the rats to squeal and*

*Bashan's* 45  
*Bull to bellow.*

*"Littlest and last Van Vrooman, do you come too?"  
 She knew him, it appeared, would know him better,  
 The scarlet hulk of hell with a fat bosom,  
 Pirouetting at the bottom of the forest.* 50

*Certainly Max had come, but he was going,  
 Unequal contests never being commanded  
 On young knights only armed in innocence.  
 "When I am a grown man I will come here  
 And cut your head off!" That was very well;* 55  
*Not a true heart beating in Christendom  
 Could have said more, but that for the present  
 would do.*

*Max went straight home; and nothing chilled him  
 more*

*Than the company kept him by the witch's laugh  
 And the witch's song, and the creeping of his  
 flesh.* 60

*Max is more firmly domiciliated.*



*A great house is Van Vrooman, a green slope  
South to the sun do the great ones inhabit  
And a few children play on the lawn with the nurse.  
Max has returned to his play, and you may find  
him, 65  
His famous curls unsmoothed, if you will call  
Where the Van Vroomans live, the tribe Van Vrooman  
Live there, at least, when any are at home.*



# LOVE AND SEEKING



## WESTERN WIND

Anonymous

*Western Wind, when will thou blow?*

*The small rain down can rain,—*

*Christ, if my love were in my arms*

*And I in my bed again!*

# WAS IT A FORM?

Henry Reynolds

*Was it a form, a gait, a grace,  
 Was it their sweetness merely?  
 Was it the heaven of a bright face,  
 That made me love so dearly?*

*Was it a skin of silk and snow, 5  
 That soul and senses wounded?  
 Was't any of these, or all of these,  
 Whereon my faith was founded?*

*Ah, no! 'Twas a far deeper part 10  
 Than all the rest that won me;  
 'Twas a fair-clothed but feigning heart  
 I loved, and has undone me.*

UPON MISTRESS SUSANNA  
SOUTHWELL HER FEET

Robert Herrick

*Her pretty feet  
Like snails did creep  
A little out, and then,  
As if they playèd at bo-peep,  
Did soon draw in again.*

## SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

Lord Byron

## I

*She walks in beauty, like the night  
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
 And all that's best of dark and bright  
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
 Thus mellowed to that tender light* 5  
*Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

## II

*One shade the more, one ray the less,  
 Had half impaired the nameless grace  
 Which waves in every raven tress,  
 Or softly lightens o'er her face;* 10  
*Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.*

## III

*And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,* 15  
*But tell of days in goodness spent,  
 A mind at peace with all below,  
 A heart whose love is innocent!*



## SONNET 30

William Shakespeare

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
 I summon up remembrance of things past,  
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:  
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5  
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
 And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,  
 And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:  
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10  
 The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan  
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
 All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

## SONNET

*from* ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

Sir Philip Sidney

*With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the  
skies!*

*How silently, and with how wan a face!*

*What! may it be that even in heav'nly place*

*That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?*

*Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes* 5

*Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;*

*I read it in thy looks,—thy languished grace*

*To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.*

*Then, ev'n of fellowship, O moon, tell me,*

*Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?* 10

*Are beauties there as proud as here they be?*

*Do they above love to be loved, and yet*

*Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?*

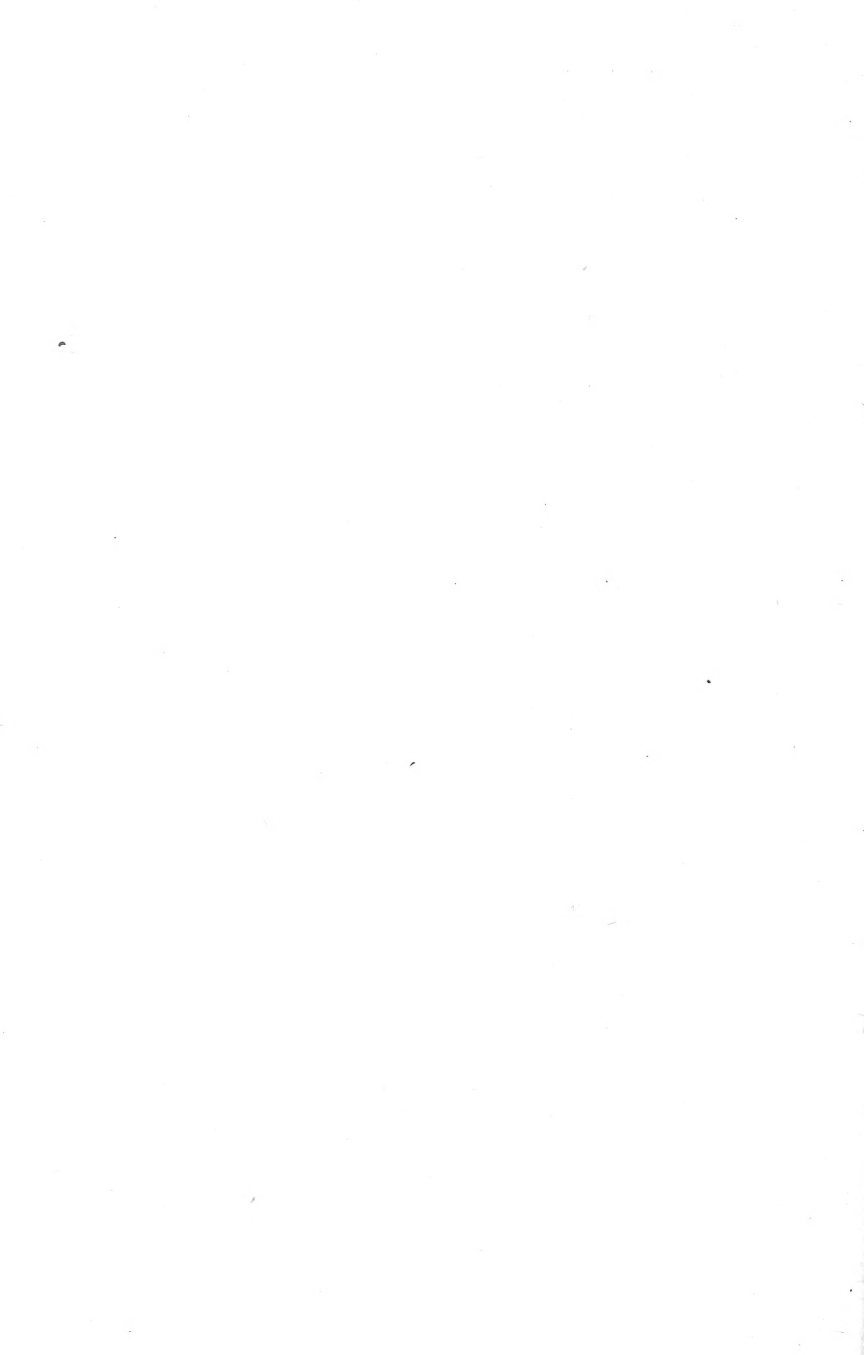
*Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?*



*And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and  
pears,  
And we gave her all our money but our subway  
fares.*

LOVE AND

DISAPPOINTMENT



## BONNY BARBARA ALLEN

Anonymous

*It was in and about the Martinmas time,  
When the green leaves were a-falling,  
That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,  
Fell in love with Barbara Allen.*

*He sent his man down through the town, 5  
To the place where she was dwelling:  
"O haste and come to my master dear,  
Gin ye be Barbara Allen."*

*O hooly, hooly rose she up,  
To the place where he was lying, 10  
And when she drew the curtain by,  
"Young man, I think you're dying."*

*"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,  
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allen";  
"O the better for me ye's never be, 15  
Though your heart's blood were a-spilling."*

*"O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,  
"When ye was in the tavern a-drinking,*

*That ye made the healths gae round and round,  
And slighted Barbara Allen?"* 20

*He turned his face unto the wall,  
And death was with him dealing:  
"Adieu, adieu, my good friends all,  
And be kind to Barbara Allen."*

*And slowly, slowly rose she up, 25  
And slowly, slowly left him,  
And sighing said she could not stay  
Since death of life had reft him.*

*She had not gone a mile but twa,  
When she heard the dead-bell ringing, 30  
And every jow that the dead-bell geid,  
It cried "Woe to Barbara Allen!"*

*"O Mother, mother, make my bed!  
O make it saft and narrow!  
Since my love died for me today, 35  
I'll die for him tomorrow!"*



## WHEN I WAS FAIR AND YOUNG

Queen Elizabeth of England

*When I was fair and young, and favor gracèd me,  
 Of many was I sought, their mistress for to be;  
 But I did scorn them all, and answered them there-  
 fore,*

*Go, go, go, seek some other where,*

*Importune me no more!*

5

*How many weeping eyes I made to pine with woe,  
 How many sighing hearts, I have no skill to show;  
 Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them there-  
 fore,*

*Go, go, go, seek some other where,*

*Importune me no more!*

10

*Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious  
 boy,*

*And said: Fine dame, since that you be so coy,  
 I will so pluck your plumes that you shall say no  
 more,*

*Go, go, go, seek some other where,*

*Importune me no more!*

15

*When he had spake these words, such change grew  
in my breast*

*That neither night nor day since that, I could  
take any rest.*

*Then lo! I did repent that I had said before,*

*Go, go, go, seek some other where,*

*Importune me no more!*

THE LOVER SHOWETH HOW  
HE IS FORSAKEN OF SUCH  
AS HE SOMETIME ENJOYED

Sir Thomas Wyatt

*They flee from me, that sometime did me seek,  
With naked foot stalking within my chamber.  
Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meek,  
That now are wild, and do not once remember  
That sometime they have put themselves in dan-  
ger*

*To take bread at my hand; and now they range,  
Busily seeking in continual change.*

*Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise,  
Twenty times better; but once especial,  
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,  
When her loose gown did from her shoulders fall,  
And she me caught in her arms long and small,  
And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss  
And softly said, Dear heart, how like you this?*

*It was no dream, for I lay broad awaking.  
But all is turned now, through my gentleness,  
Into a bitter fashion of forsaking;  
And I have leave to go, of her goodness,  
And she also to use newfangleness.  
But since that I unkindly so am served,  
How like you this? What hath she now deserved?*

## LOVE IS A SICKNESS

Samuel Daniel

*Love is a sickness full of woes,  
 All remedies refusing;  
 A plant that with most cutting grows,  
 Most barren with best using.*

*Why so?*

5

*More we enjoy it, more it dies;  
 If not enjoyed it sighing cries,  
 Hey ho.*

*Love is a torment of the mind,  
 A tempest everlasting;  
 And Jove hath made it of a kind,  
 Not well, nor full, nor fasting.*

10

*Why so?*

*More we enjoy it, more it dies;  
 If not enjoyed it sighing cries,  
 Hey ho.*

15

## STANZAS ON WOMAN

*from* THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

Oliver Goldsmith

*When lovely Woman stoops to folly,  
And finds too late that men betray,  
What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
What art can wash her guilt away?*

*The only art her guilt to cover,  
To hide her shame from every eye,  
To give repentance to her lover,  
And wring his bosom—is, to die.*

5

## SONNET

*from* **IDEA**

Michael Drayton

A witless gallant, a young wench that wooed  
(Yet his dull spirit her not one jot could move),  
Entreated me, as e'er I wished his good  
To write him but one sonnet to his love;  
When I, as fast as e'er my pen could trot, 5  
Poured out what first from quick invention came,  
Nor ever stood one word thereof to blot,  
Much like his wit, that was to use the same;  
But with my verses he his mistress won,  
Who doted on the dolt beyond all measure. 10  
But see, for you to heav'n for phrase I run,  
And ransack all Apollo's golden treasure;  
Yet by my troth this fool his love obtains,  
And I lose you for all my wit and pains.

## MUSIC I HEARD

Conrad Aiken

*Music I heard with you was more than music,  
 And bread I broke with you was more than bread;  
 Now that I am without you, all is desolate;  
 All that was once so beautiful is dead.*

*Your hands once touched this table and this  
     silver, 5  
 And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.  
 These things do not remember you, beloved,  
 And yet your touch upon them will not pass.*

*For it was in my heart you moved among them,  
 And blessed them with your hands and with your  
     eyes; 10  
 And in my heart they will remember always,—  
 They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.*

## MY LAST DUCHESS

Robert Browning

*That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
 Looking as if she were alive; I call  
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands  
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said                   5  
 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read  
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)                   10  
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps                   15  
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps  
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint  
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
 Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff  
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough                   20  
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
 A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made  
 glad,*



Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25  
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
 The bough of cherries some officious fool  
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each  
 Would draw from her alike the approving  
 speech, 30  
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but  
 thanked  
 Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she  
 ranked  
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35  
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this  
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let  
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,  
 —E'en then had been some stooping; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave com-  
 mands; 45

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir! Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

WEATHER AND  
THE SEASONS



## WRITTEN IN MARCH

William Wordsworth

*The Cock is crowing,  
 The stream is flowing,  
 The small birds twitter,  
 The lake doth glitter,  
 The green field sleeps in the sun; 5  
 The oldest and youngest  
 Are at work with the strongest;  
 The cattle are grazing,  
 Their heads never raising;  
 There are forty feeding like one! 10*

*Like an army defeated  
 The snow hath retreated,  
 And now doth fare ill  
 On the top of the bare hill;  
 The Ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon: 15  
 There's joy in the mountains;  
 There's life in the fountains;  
 Small clouds are sailing,  
 Blue sky prevailing;  
 The rain is over and gone! 20*

## SONG

*from* THE PRINCESS

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.  
 The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.*

*Now droops the milk-white peacock like a  
 ghost, 5  
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.*

*Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.*

*Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me. 10*

*Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
 And slips into the bosom of the lake.  
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.*

# STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Robert Frost

*Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.*

5

*He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

10

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

15

# THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT

Emily Dickinson

*There's a certain slant of light,  
On winter afternoons,  
That oppresses, like the weight  
Of cathedral tunes.*

*Heavenly hurt it gives us;  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference  
Where the meanings are.*

5

*None may teach it anything,  
'Tis the seal, despair,—  
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the air.*

10

*When it comes, the landscape listens,  
Shadows hold their breath;  
When it goes, 'tis like the distance  
On the look of death.*

15



# STREAM AND SUN AT GLENDALOUGH

William Butler Yeats

*Through intricate motions ran  
Stream and gliding sun  
And all my heart seemed gay:  
Some stupid thing that I had done  
Made my attention stray.*

5

*Repentance keeps my heart impure;  
But what am I that dare  
Fancy that I can  
Better conduct myself or have more  
Sense than a common man?*

10

*What motion of the sun or stream  
Or eyelid shot the gleam  
That pierced my body through?  
What made me live like these that seem  
Self-born, born anew?*

15

## THE DARK MORNING

Thomas Merton

*This is the black day when  
Fog rides the ugly air:  
Water wades among the buildings  
To the prisoner's curled ear.*

*Then rain, in thin sentences,  
Slakes him like danger,  
Whose heart is his Germany  
Fevered with anger.*

5

*This is the dark day when  
Locks let the enemy in  
Through all the coiling passages of  
(Curled ear) my prison!*

10

## TO AUTUMN

John Keats

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves  
 run;  
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,        5  
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease,        10  
 For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy  
 cells.*

*Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;        15  
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
 Spares the next swath and all its twined  
 flowers:*

*And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
 Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20  
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
 Thou watchest the last ooziings hours by hours.*

*Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25  
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
 Among the river sallows, borne aloft  
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly 30  
 bourn;  
 Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.*

MEDITATIONS ON  
THE WORLD



## NEUTRAL TONES

Thomas Hardy

*We stood by a pond that winter day,  
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,  
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;  
—They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.*

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove      5  
Over tedious riddles solved years ago;  
And some words played between us to and fro  
On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadeſt thing  
 Alive enough to have ſtrength to die; 10  
 And a grin of bitterneſs ſwept thereby  
 Like an ominous bird a-wing. . . .

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,  
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me  
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,      15  
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

(In Springfield, Illinois)

Vachel Lindsay

*It is portentous, and a thing of state  
That here at midnight, in our little town,  
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,  
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,*

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards      5  
He lingers where his children used to play,  
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones  
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

*A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,  
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl      10  
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,  
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.*

*He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.  
He is among us:—as in times before!  
And we who toss and lie awake for long,  
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.*

*His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.  
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?*



*Too many peasants fight, they know not why;  
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.* 20

*The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.  
He sees the dread-naughts scouring every main.  
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now  
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.*

*He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn* 25  
*Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:  
The league of sober folk, the workers' earth,  
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.*

*It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,  
That all his hours of travail here for men* 30  
*Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace  
That he may sleep upon his hill again?*

## BIRCHES

Robert Frost

*When I see birches bend to left and right  
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.  
 Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen  
 them*

5

*Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
 After a rain. They click upon themselves  
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal  
 shells*

10

*Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—  
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by the  
 load,  
 And they seem not to break; though once they are  
 bowed*

15

*So low for long, they never right themselves:  
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground  
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair*

Before them over their heads to dry in the sun. 20  
But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm  
I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—  
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball, 25  
Whose only play was what he found himself,  
Summer or winter, and could play alone.  
One by one he subdued his father's trees  
By riding them down over and over again  
Until he took the stiffness out of them, 30  
And not one but hung limp, not one was left  
For him to conquer. He learned all there was  
To learn about not launching out too soon  
And so not carrying the tree away  
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise 35  
To the top branches, climbing carefully  
With the same pains you use to fill a cup  
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.  
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,  
Kicking his way down through the air to the  
ground. 40  
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.  
And so I dream of going back to be.  
It's when I'm weary of considerations,  
And life is too much like a pathless wood

*Where your face burns and tickles with the cob-  
webs* 45

*Broken across it, and one eye is weeping  
From a twig's having lashed across it open.*

*I'd like to get away from earth awhile  
And then come back to it and begin over.*

*May no fate willfully misunderstand me* 50

*And half grant what I wish and snatch me away*

*Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:*

*I don't know where it's likely to go better.*

*I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,*

*And climb black branches up a snow-white  
trunk* 55

*Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,*

*But dipped its top and set me down again.*

*That would be good both going and coming back.*

*One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.*

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;* 5

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,* 10

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.* 15

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.* 20

## THE LONG HILL

Sara Teasdale

*I must have passed the crest a while ago  
 And now I am going down—  
 Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,  
 But the brambles were always catching the hem  
 of my gown.*

*All the morning I thought how proud I should  
 be, 5  
 To stand there straight as a queen,  
 Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world  
 under me—  
 But the air was dull; there was little I could have  
 seen.*

*It was nearly level along the beaten track—  
 And the brambles caught in my gown— 10  
 But it's no use now to think of turning back, —  
 The rest of the way will be only going down.*

when serpents bargain for the  
right to squirm

e. e. cummings

*when serpents bargain for the right to squirm  
and the sun strikes to gain a living wage—  
when thorns regard their roses with alarm  
and rainbows are insured against old age*

*when every thrush may sing no new moon in* 5  
*if all screech-owls have not okayed his voice  
—and any wave signs on the dotted line  
or else an ocean is compelled to close*

*when the oak begs permission of the birch*  
*to make an acorn—valleys accuse their* 10  
*mountains of having altitude—and march  
denounces april as a saboteur*

*then we'll believe in that incredible  
unanimal mankind (and not until)*

# ON READING THE WAR DIARY OF A DEFUNCT AMBASSADOR

Siegfried Sassoon

*So that's your Diary—that's your private mind  
Translated into shirt-sleeved History. That  
Is what diplomacy has left behind  
For after-ages to peruse, and find  
What passed beneath your elegant silk-hat.* 5

*You were a fine old gentleman; compact  
Of shrewdness, charm, refinement and finesse.  
Impeccable in breeding, taste and dress,  
No diplomatic quality you lacked—  
No tittle of ambassadorial tact.* 10

*I can imagine you among "the guns,"  
Urbanely peppering partridge, grouse, or pheasant—  
Guest of those infinitely privileged ones  
Whose lives are padded, petrified, and pleasant.  
I visualize you feeding off gold plate 15  
And gossiping on grave affairs of State.*

*Now you're defunct; your gossip's gravely printed;  
The world discovers where you lunched and dined  
On such and such a day; and what was hinted*



*By ministers and generals far behind* 20  
*The all-important conflict, carnage-tinted.*

*The world can read the rumors that you gleaned*  
*From various Fronts; the well-known Names you*  
*met;*

*Each conference you attended and convened;*  
*And (at appropriate moments) what you ate.* 25  
*Thus (if the world's acute) it can derive*  
*Your self, exact, uncensored, and alive.*

*The world will find no pity in your pages;*  
*No exercise of spirit worthy of mention;*  
*Only a public-funeral grief-convention;* 30  
*And all the circumspection of the ages.*

*But I, for one, am grateful, overjoyed,*  
*And unindignant that your punctual pen*  
*Should have been so constructively employed*  
*In manifesting to unprivileged men* 35  
*The visionless officialized fatuity*  
*That once kept Europe safe for Perpetuity.*

## THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

W. H. Auden

(To JS/07/M/378  
This Marble Monument  
Is Erected by the State)

*He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
One against whom there was no official complaint,  
And all the reports of his conduct agree  
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word,  
he was a saint,*

*For in everything he did he served the Greater  
Community.* 5

*Except for the War till the day he retired  
He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.*

*Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,  
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,* 10  
*(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)*

*And our Social Psychology workers found  
That he was popular with his mates and liked a  
drink.*

*The Press are convinced that he bought a paper  
every day*

*And that his reactions to advertisements were nor-  
mal in every way.* 15

Policies taken out in his name prove that he was  
 fully insured,  
 And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital  
 but left it cured.

Both Producers Research and High-Grade living  
 declare

He was fully sensible to the advantages of the  
 Installment Plan

And had everything necessary to the Modern  
 Man, 20

A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.

Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of  
 year;

When there was peace, he was for peace; when  
 there was war, he went.

He was married and added five children to the  
 population, 25

Which our Eugenist says was the right number for  
 a parent of his generation,

And our teachers report that he never interfered  
 with their education.

Was he free? Was he happy? The question is ab-  
 surd:

Had anything been wrong, we should certainly  
 have heard.

## THE SPRING POTOMAC

Will R. Moses

*Force of the season flashes the bird north,  
 And the fish shearing up cold currents to spawn.  
 At that time fishermen stand on the banks of rivers.  
 Along the Potomac they huddle on every rock  
 From before light comes till after the light is gone. 5*

*A seasonal rite performed in happiness:  
 Fish blood stiffened on fingers, perhaps, allows  
 Timbre of friendliness in voices that call  
 From rock to rock, and voices that fondly curse  
 The act of their pleasure, there where the water  
 flows. 10*

*Rain in Virginia curtains the gentle redbud.  
 In the youngest leaves, what cool and delicate  
 green!  
 After the ritual, fishermen drive back home  
 Sweeter in soul, they think, athletic in mind,  
 Their tempers purged of the winter's sooty  
 spleen. 15*

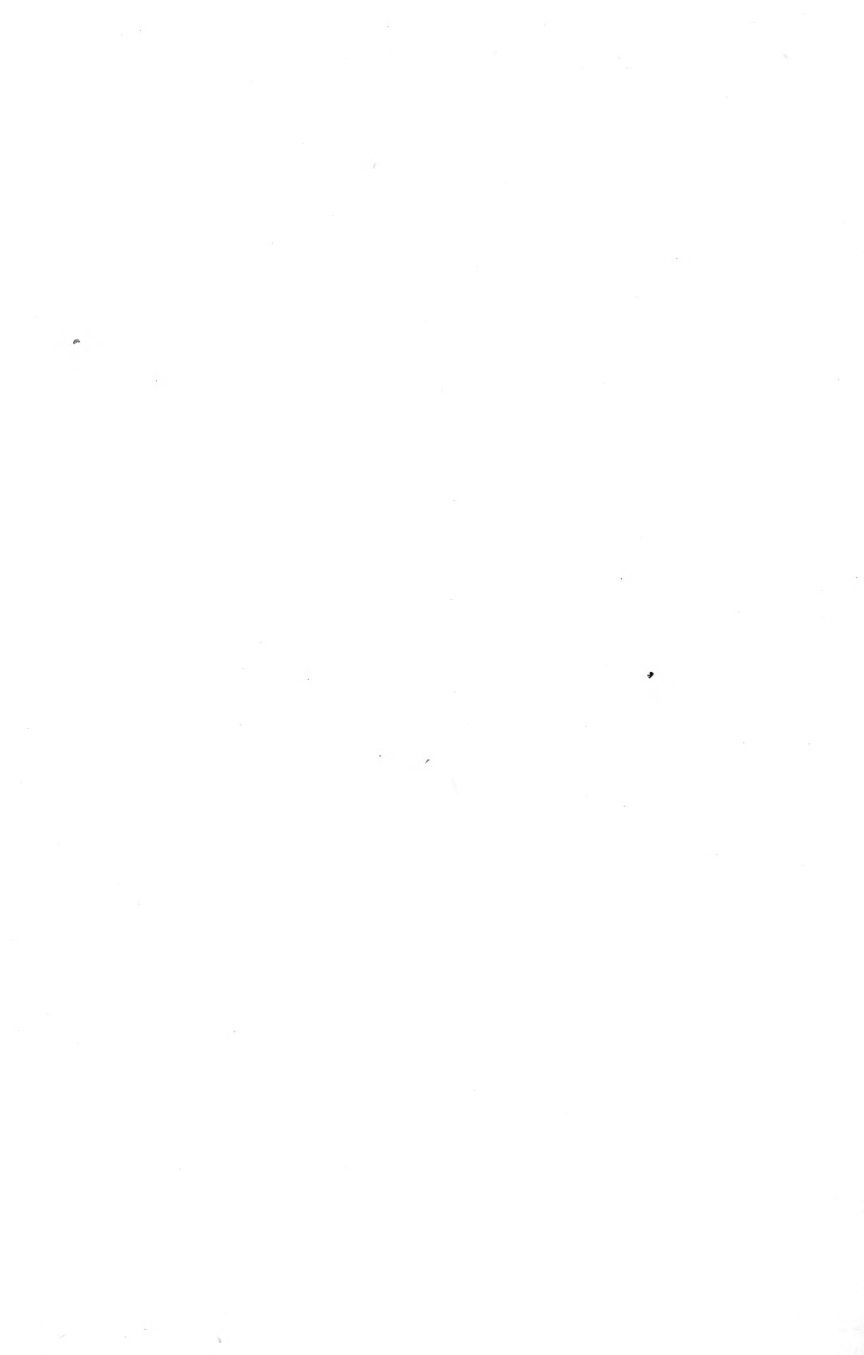
*Yet I have a vision, here on my fishing rock  
 Beside the medicinal river. Like an old wall*

*The river reaches. It carries the ghostly print  
Of a million unwitting prayers and lamentations  
Flung by men nostalgia-gnawn at soul.* 20

*And the casting hands of the fishermen silently  
strike it.*

*In silence the ghostly cry of an old regret:  
"May our strength fail, oh, may our right hands  
wither*

*If we forget thee, time of our simple fathers,  
And the breath dry in our throats, if we forget!"* 25



MEDITATIONS ON  
RELIGION





## ALL BUT BLIND

Walter de la Mare

*All but blind*

*In his chambered hole  
Gropes for worms  
The four-clawed Mole.*

*All but blind*

*In the evening sky,  
The hooded Bat  
Twirls softly by.*

5

*All but blind*

*In the burning day  
The Barn-Owl blunders  
On her way.*

10

*And blind as are*

*These three to me,  
So, blind to Someone  
I must be.*

15

## DOVER BEACH

Matthew Arnold

*The sea is calm tonight.**The tide is full, the moon lies fair**Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.*

5

*Come to the window, sweet is the night air!**Only, from the long line of spray**Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,**Listen! you hear the grating roar**Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and  
fling,*

10

*At their return, up the high strand,**Begin, and cease, and then again begin,**With tremulous cadence slow, and bring**The eternal note of sadness in.**Sophocles, long ago,*

15

*Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought**Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow**Of human misery; we**Find also in the sound a thought,**Hearing it by this distant northern sea.*

20

*The Sea of Faith*

*Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.*

*But now I only hear*

*Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,* 25

*Retreating, to the breath*

*Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear*

*And naked shingles of the world.*

*Ah! love, let us be true*

*To one another! for the world, which seems* 30

*To lie before us like a land of dreams,*

*So various, so beautiful, so new,*

*Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,*

*Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;*

*And we are here as on a darkling plain,* 35

*Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,*

*Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

## IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

John Betjeman

*Let me take this other glove off  
As the vox humana swells,  
And the beauteous fields of Eden  
Bask beneath the Abbey bells.  
Here where England's statesmen lie, 5  
Listen to a lady's cry.*

*Gracious Lord, oh bomb the Germans.  
Spare their women for Thy Sake,  
And if that is not too easy  
We will pardon Thy Mistake. 10  
But, gracious Lord, whate'er shall be,  
Don't let anyone bomb me.*

*Keep our Empire undismembered  
Guide our Forces by Thy Hand,  
Gallant blacks from far Jamaica, 15  
Honduras and Togoland;  
Protect them Lord in all their fights,  
And, even more, protect the whites.*

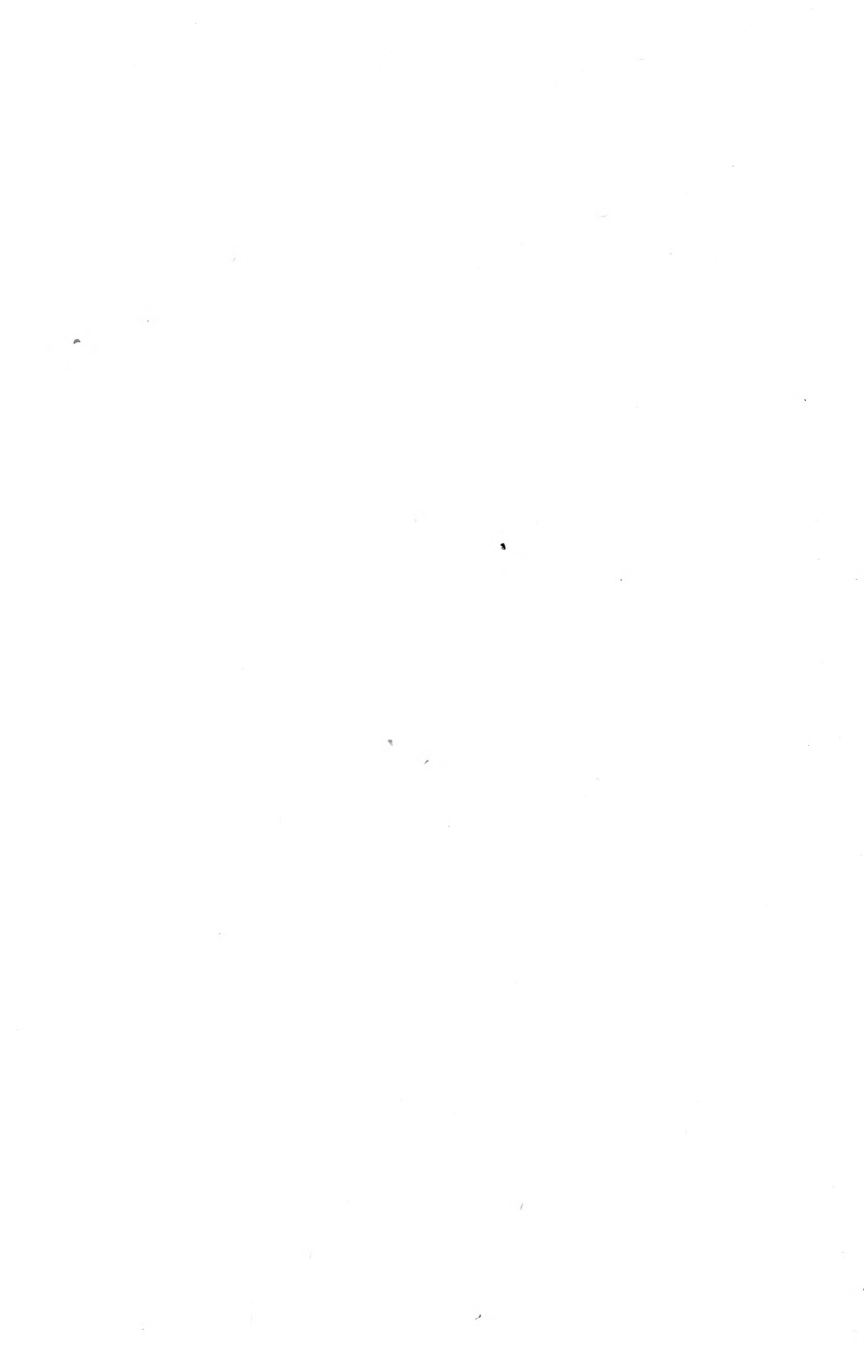
*Think of what our Nation stands for,  
Books from Boots' and country lanes, 20*

*Free speech, free passes, class distinction,  
 Democracy and proper drains.  
 Lord, put beneath Thy special care  
 One-eighty-nine Cadogan Square.*

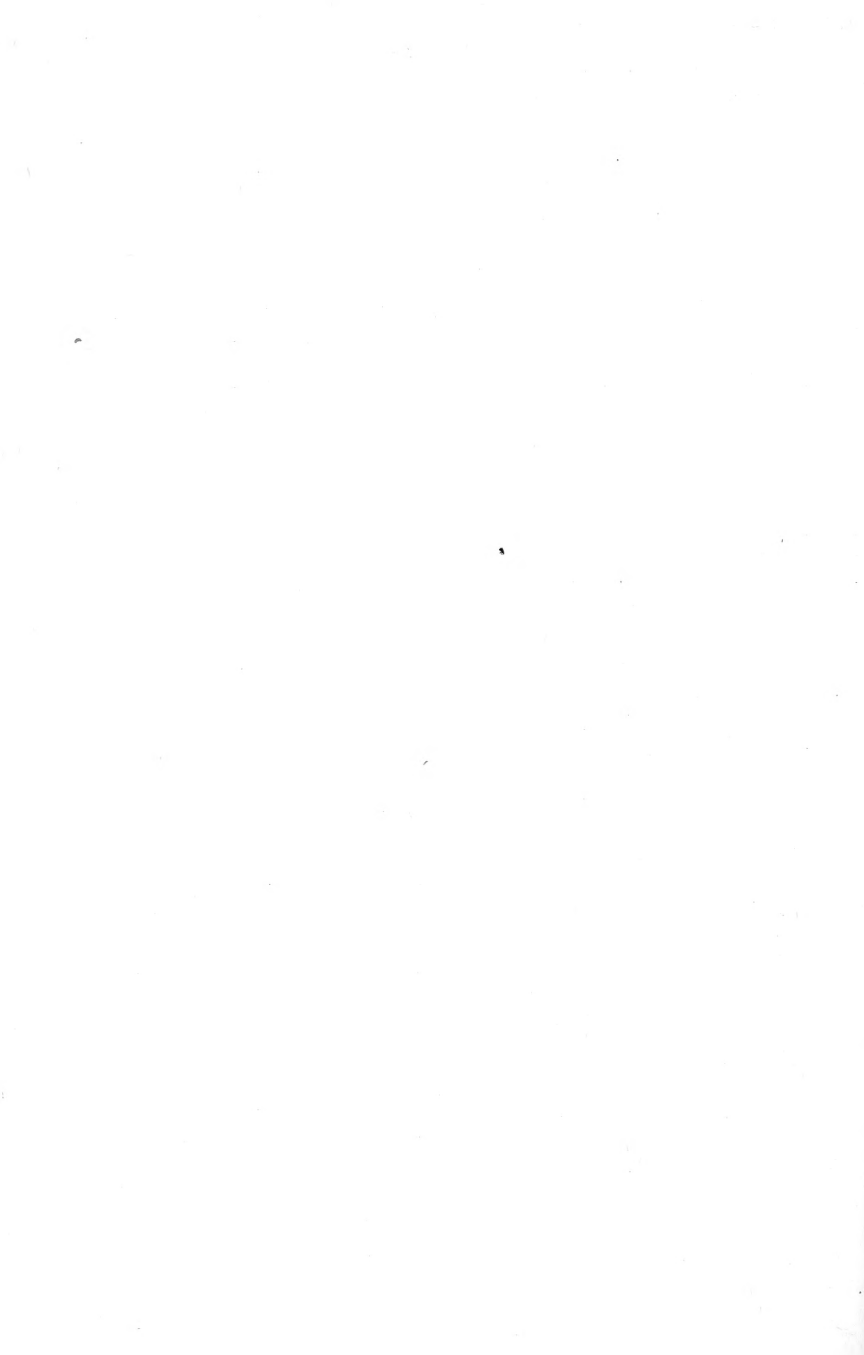
*Although dear Lord I am a sinner. 25  
 I have done no major crime;  
 Now I'll come to Evening Service  
 Whensoever I have time.  
 So, Lord, reserve for me a crown,  
 And do not let my shares go down. 30*

*I will labour for Thy Kingdom,  
 Help our lads to win the war,  
 Send white feathers to the cowards,  
 Join the Women's Army Corps,  
 Then wash the Steps around Thy Throne 35  
 In the Eternal Safety Zone.*

*Now I feel a little better,  
 What a treat to hear Thy Word,  
 Where the bones of leading statesmen  
 Have so often been interr'd. 40  
 And now, dear Lord, I cannot wait  
 Because I have a luncheon date.*



SUFFERING AND  
DEATH





# RICHARD CORY

Edwin Arlington Robinson

*Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him:  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean favored, and imperially slim.*

*And he was always quietly arrayed, 5  
And he was always human when he talked;  
And still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he  
walked.*

*And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—  
And admirably schooled in every grace: 10  
In fine, we thought that he was everything  
To make us wish that we were in his place.*

*So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat, and cursed the  
bread;  
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, 15  
Went home and put a bullet through his head.*

## LUCY GRAY; OR SOLITUDE

William Wordsworth

*Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:  
 And, when I crossed the wild,  
 I chanced to see at break of day  
 The solitary child.*

*No mate, no comrade Lucy knew; 5  
 She dwelt on a wide moor,  
 —The sweetest thing that ever grew  
 Beside a human door!*

*You yet may spy the fawn at play,  
 The hare upon the green; 10  
 But the sweet face of Lucy Gray  
 Will never more be seen.*

*"To-night will be a stormy night—  
 You to the town must go;  
 And take a lantern, Child, to light 15  
 Your mother through the snow."*

*"That, Father! will I gladly do:  
 'Tis scarcely afternoon—  
 The minster-clock has just struck two,  
 And yonder is the moon!" 20*

*At this the Father raised his hook,  
And snapped a faggot-band;  
He plied his work;—and Lucy took  
The lantern in her hand.*

*Not blither is the mountain roe: 25  
With many a wanton stroke  
Her feet disperse the powdery snow  
That rises up like smoke.*

*The storm came on before its time:  
She wandered up and down; 30  
And many a hill did Lucy climb:  
And never reached the town.*

*The wretched parents all that night  
Went shouting far and wide;  
But there was neither sound nor sight 35  
To serve them for a guide.*

*At day-break on a hill they stood  
That overlooked the moor;  
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,  
A furlong from their door. 40*

*They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,  
“In heaven we all shall meet”;*

—When in the snow the mother spied  
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge 45  
They tracked the footmarks small;  
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,  
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed:  
The marks were still the same; 50  
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;  
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank  
Those footmarks, one by one,  
Into the middle of the plank; 55  
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day  
She is a living child;  
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray  
Upon the lonesome wild. 60

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,  
And never looks behind;  
And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind.

A SLUMBER DID MY  
SPIRIT SEAL

William Wordsworth

*A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.*

*No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees.*

5

# THE NIGHT IS FREEZING FAST

A. E. Housman

*The night is freezing fast,  
To-morrow comes December;  
And winterfalls of old  
Are with me from the past;  
And chiefly I remember* 5  
*How Dick would hate the cold.*

*Fall, winter, fall; for he,  
Prompt hand and headpiece clever,  
Has woven a winter robe,  
And made of earth and sea* 10  
*His overcoat for ever,  
And wears the turning globe.*

## I WAGE NOT ANY FEUD

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and face;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him can fright my faith.*

*Eternal process moving on,* 5  
*From state to state the spirit walks;*  
*And these are but the shattered stalks,*  
*Or ruined chrysalis of one.*

*Nor blame I Death, because he bare*  
*The use of virtue out of earth;* 10  
*I know transplanted human worth*  
*Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.*

*For this alone on Death I wreak*  
*The wrath that garners in my heart:*  
*He put our lives so far apart* 15  
*We cannot hear each other speak.*

## SONG

*from CYMBELINE*

William Shakespeare

*Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
 Nor the the furious winter's rages;  
 Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
 Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
 Golden lads and girls all must,* 5  
*As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

*Fear no more the frown o' the great,  
 Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;  
 Care no more to clothe and eat;  
 To thee the reed is as the oak:* 10  
*The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
 All follow this, and come to dust.*

*Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
 Nor th'all-dreaded thunder-stone;  
 Fear not slander, censure rash;* 15  
*Thou hast finished joy and moan:  
 All lovers young, all lovers must  
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.*



*No exorciser harm thee!*

*Nor no witchcraft charm thee!*

20

*Ghost unlaid forbear thee!*

*Nothing ill come near thee!*

*Quiet consummation have;*

*And renownéd be thy grave!*

# WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST

Christina Rossetti

- When I am dead, my dearest,*  
*Sing no sad songs for me;*  
*Plant thou no roses at my head,*  
*Nor shady cypress tree.*  
*Be the green grass above me* 5  
*With showers and dewdrops wet;*  
*And if thou wilt, remember,*  
*And if thou wilt, forget.*
- I shall not see the shadows,*  
*I shall not feel the rain;* 10  
*I shall not hear the nightingale*  
*Sing on as if in pain.*  
*And dreaming through the twilight*  
*That doth not rise nor set,*  
*Haply I may remember,* 15  
*And haply may forget.*

## RIZPAH

17—

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I

*Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and  
sea—*

*And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out  
to me!"*

*Why should he call me tonight, when he knows  
that I cannot go?*

*For the downs are as bright as day, and the full  
moon stares at the snow.*

II

*We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out  
of the town.* 5

*The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing  
over the down,*

*When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by  
the creak of the chain,*

*And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself  
drenched with the rain.*

III

*Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to  
fall?*

*I have taken them home, I have number'd the  
bones, I have hidden them all.* 10

*What am I saying? and what are you? do you come  
as a spy?*

*Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so  
must it lie.*

#### IV

*Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what  
have you heard?*

*Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a  
word.*

*O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their  
spies—* 15

*But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to  
darken my eyes.*

#### V

*Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should you  
know of the night,*

*The blast and the burning shame and the bitter  
frost and the fright?*

*I have done it, while you were asleep—you were  
only made for the day.*

*I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may  
go your way.* 20

## VI

*Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying wife.*

*But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.*

*I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.*

*"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.*

*I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child—* 25

*"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild—*

*And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never could rest.*

*The King should have made him a soldier; he would have been one of his best.*

## VII

*But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;*

*They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;* 30

*And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done*

*He flung it among his fellows—"I'll none of it," said my son.*

## VIII

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I  
 told them my tale,  
 God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd  
 him for robbing the mail.  
 They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had al-  
 ways borne a good name— 35  
 To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—isn't  
 that enough shame?  
 Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set  
 him so high  
 That all the ships of the world could stare at him,  
 passing by.  
 God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and the horrible  
 fowls of the air,  
 But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him  
 and hang'd him there. 40

## IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my  
 last good-bye;  
 They had fasten'd the door of his cell. "O mother!"  
 I heard him cry.  
 I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something  
 further to say,

*And now I shall never know it. The jailer forced me  
away.*

## X

*Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy  
that was dead,* 45

*They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me  
down on my bed.*

*"Mother, O mother!"—he call'd in the dark to me  
year after year—*

*They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that  
I couldn't but hear;*

*And then at the last they found I had grown so  
stupid and still*

*They let me abroad again—but the creatures had  
worked their will.* 50

## XI

*Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone  
was left—*

*I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you  
call it a theft?—*

*My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones  
that had laughed and had cried—*

*Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not theirs—they had  
moved in my side.*

## XII

*Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em,  
I buried 'em all—* 55

*I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the  
churchyard wall.*

*My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of  
judgment 'ill sound,*

*But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy  
ground.*

## XIII

*They would scratch him up—they would hang him  
again on the cursèd tree.*

*Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—let all that  
be,* 60

*And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's goodwill  
toward men—*

*'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me  
hear it again;*

*'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes,  
O, yes!*

*For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour  
lives but to bless.*

*He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst  
of the worst,* 65

*And the first may be last—I have heard it in church  
—and the last may be first.*



*Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must  
know,*

*Year after year in the mist and the wind, and the  
shower and the snow.*

XIV

*Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never  
repented his sin.*

*How do they know it? are they his mother? are you  
of his kin?* 70

*Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the  
downs began,*

*The wind that'll wail like a child and the sea that'll  
moan like a man?*

XV

*Election, Election, and Reprobation—it's all very  
well.*

*But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find  
him in hell.*

*For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has  
look'd into my care,* 75

*And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy,  
I know not where.*

XVI

*And if he be lost—but to save my soul, that is all  
your desire—*

*Do you think that I care for my soul if my boy be  
gone to the fire?*

*I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may  
leave me alone—*

*You never have borne a child—you are just as hard  
as a stone.* 80

# XVII

*Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean  
to be kind,*

*But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice  
in the wind—*

*The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call  
in the dark,*

*And he calls to me now from the church and not  
from the gibbet—for hark!*

*Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shak-  
ing the walls—* 85

*Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night. I am go-  
ing. He calls.*

# SONNET ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

John Milton

*Methought I saw my late espousèd Saint  
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
 Whom Jove's great Son to her glad Husband gave,  
 Rescued from death by force though pale and  
 faint.*  
*Mine as whom washed from spot of child-bed  
 taint,* 5  
*Purification in the Old Law did save,  
 And such, as yet once more I trust to have  
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,  
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:*  
*Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight,* 10  
*Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined  
 So clear, as in no face with more delight.  
 But O! as to embrace me she inclined  
 I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.*

## DIRGE

from THE CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ULYSSES  
FOR THE ARMOR OF ACHILLES

James Shirley

*The glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things;  
There is no armor against Fate;  
Death lays his icy hand on kings:  
Sceptre and Crown 5  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.*

*Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And plant fresh laurels where they kill: 10  
But their strong nerves at last must yield;  
They tame but one another still:  
Early or late  
They stoop to fate,  
And must give up their murmuring breath 15  
When they, pale captives, creep to death.*

*The garlands wither on your brow;  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!*

*Upon Death's purple altar now*

*See where the victor-victim bleeds.*

20

*Your heads must come*

*To the cold tomb:*

*Only the actions of the just*

*Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.*

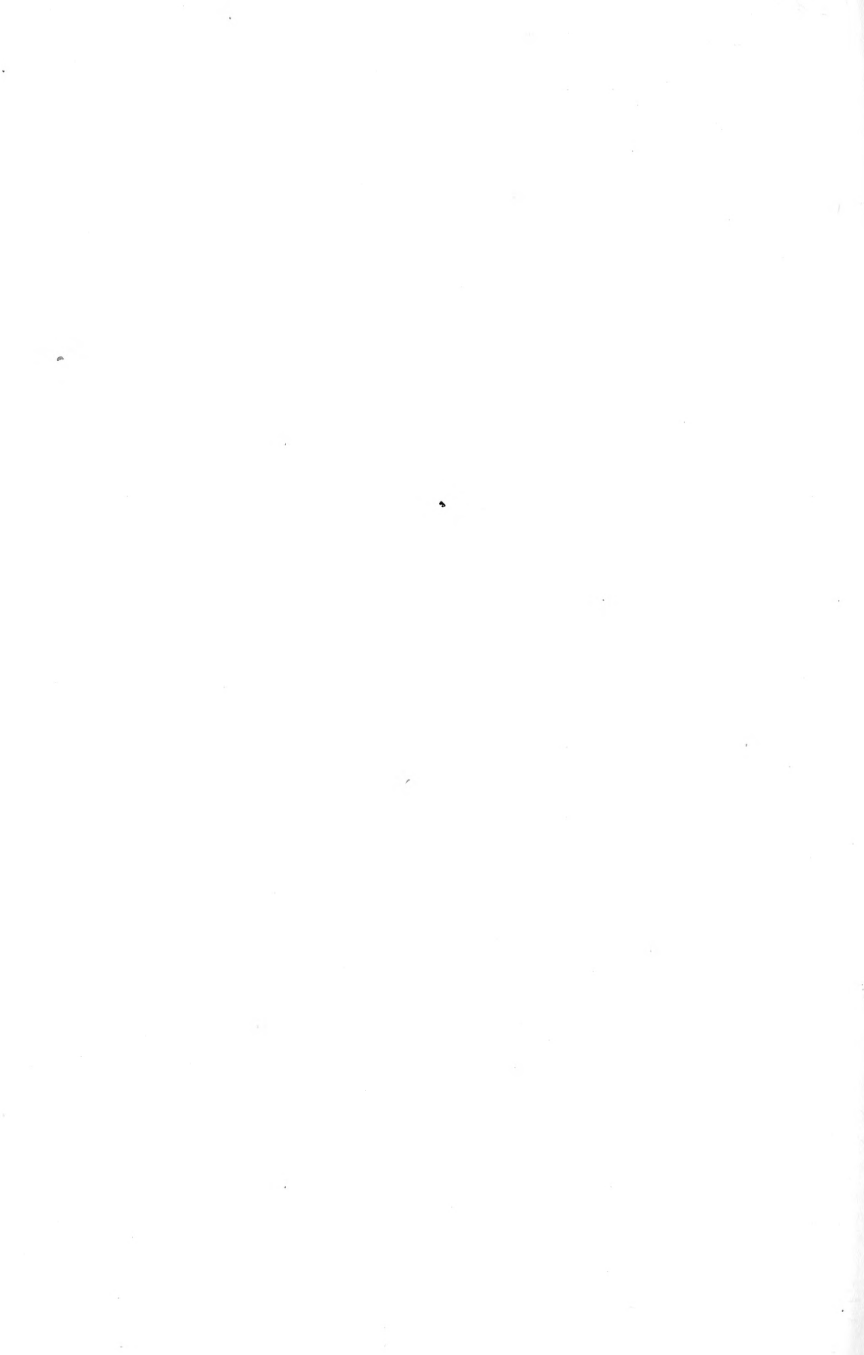
## MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS

W. H. Auden

*About suffering they were never wrong,  
 The Old Masters: how well they understood  
 Its human position; how it takes place  
 While someone else is eating or opening a window  
     or just walking dully along;  
 How, when the aged are reverently, passionately  
     waiting 5  
 For the miraculous birth, there always must be  
 Children who did not specially want it to happen,  
     skating  
 On a pond at the edge of the wood:  
 They never forgot  
 That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its  
     course 10  
 Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot  
 Where dogs go on with their doggy life and the  
     torturer's horse  
 Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.*

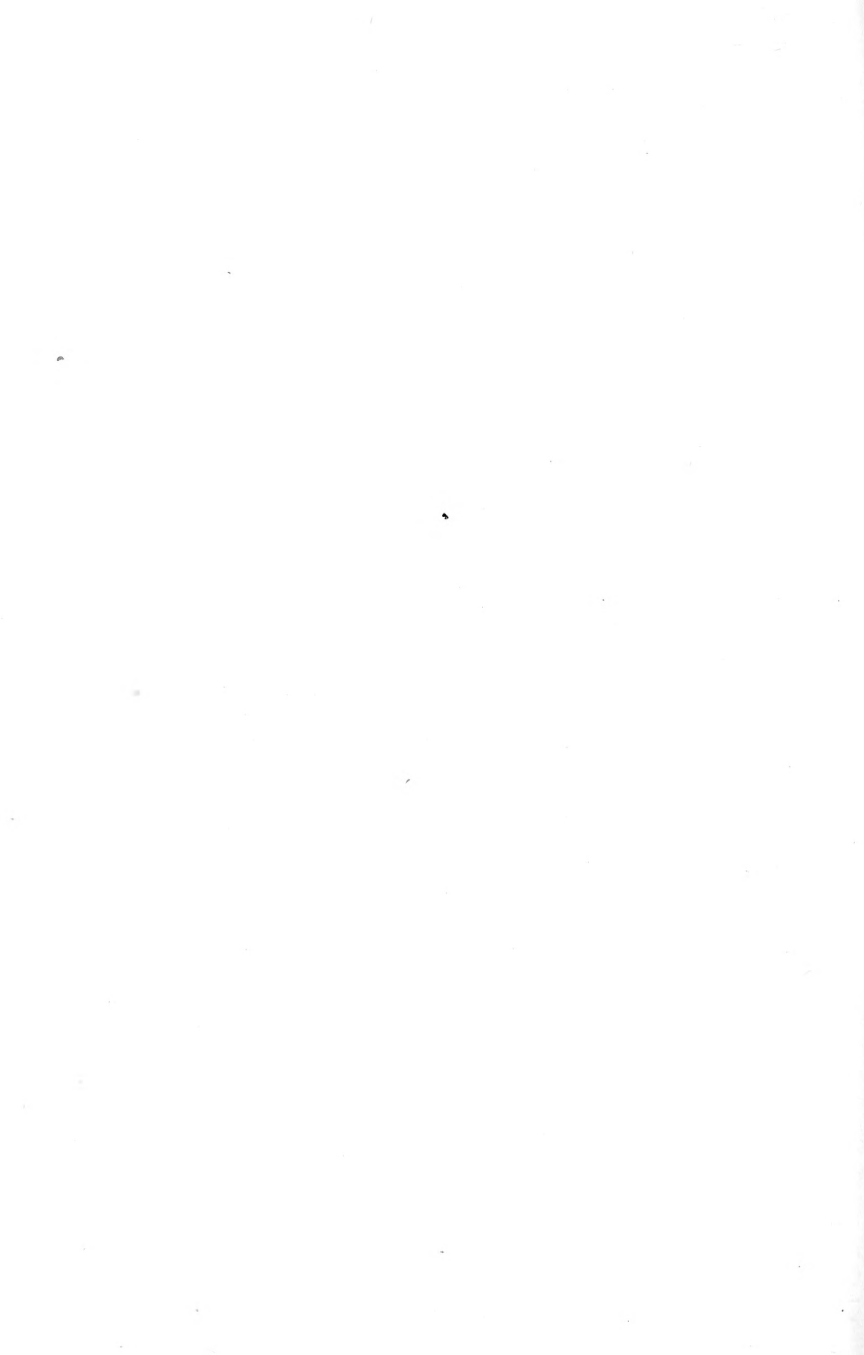
*In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything  
     turns away  
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman  
     may 15*

*Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,  
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun  
shone  
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the  
green  
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must  
have seen  
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky, 20  
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.*





# RHYTHM BAND



## TARANTELLA

Hilaire Belloc

Do you remember an Inn,  
 Miranda?  
 Do you remember an Inn?  
 And the tedding and the spreading  
 Of the straw for a bedding, 5  
 And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,  
 And the wine that tasted of the tar?  
 And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers  
 (Under the vine of the dark verandah)?  
 Do you remember an Inn, Miranda? 10  
 Do you remember an Inn?  
 And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers  
 Who hadn't got a penny,  
 And who weren't paying any,  
 And the hammer at the doors and the Din? 15  
 And the Hip! Hop! Hap!  
 Of the clap  
 Of the hands to the twirl and the swirl  
 Of the girl gone chancing,  
 Glancing, 20  
 Dancing,  
 Backing and advancing,  
 Snapping of the clapper to the spin

*Out and in—  
And the Ting, Tong, Tang of the Guitar! 25  
Do you remember an Inn,  
Miranda?  
Do you remember an Inn?*

*Never more,  
Miranda, 30  
Never more.*

*Only the high peaks hoar:  
And Aragon a torrent at the door.  
No sound  
In the walls of the Halls where falls 35*

*The tread  
Of the feet of the dead to the ground  
No sound:  
But the boom  
Of the far Waterfall like Doom. 40*

## YOUNG GAL'S BLUES

Langston Hughes

*I'm gonna walk to de graveyard  
'Hind ma friend Miss Cora Lee.  
Gonna walk to de graveyard  
'Hind ma dear friend Cora Lee.  
Cause when I'm dead some  
Body'll have to walk behind me.*

5

*I'm goin' to de po' house  
To see ma old Aunt Clew.  
Goin' to de po' house  
To see ma old Aunt Clew.  
When I'm old an' ugly  
I'll want to see somebody, too.*

10

*De po' house is lonely  
An' de grave is cold.  
O, de po' house is lonely,  
De graveyard grave is cold.  
But I'd rather be dead than  
To be ugly an' old.*

15

*When love is gone what  
Can a young gal do?*

20

*When love is gone, O,  
What can a young gal do?  
Keep on a-lovin' me, daddy,  
Cause I don't want to be blue.*

# MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT

T. S. Eliot

*Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden  
Paw—*

*For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.  
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying  
Squad's despair:*

*For when they reach the scene of crime—Macavity's  
not there!*

*Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity, 5  
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of  
gravity.*

*His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,  
And when you reach the scene of crime—Macavity's  
not there!*

*You may seek him in the basement, you may look  
up in the air—*

*But I tell you once and once again—Macavity's not  
there!*

10

*Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;  
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes  
are sunken in.*

*His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is  
highly domed;*

*His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are un-  
combed.*

*He sways his head from side to side, with move-  
ments like a snake;*

15

*And when you think he's half asleep, he's always  
wide awake.*

*Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,  
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of de-  
pravity.*

*You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him  
in the square—*

*But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not  
there!*

20

*He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at  
cards.)*

*And his footprints are not found in any file of Scot-  
land Yard's.*

*And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is  
rifled,*

*And when the milk is missing, or another Peke's  
been stifled,*

*Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis  
past repair—*

25



*Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity's not there!*

*And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,*

*Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,*

*There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—*

*But it's useless to investigate—Macavity's not there!* 30

*And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:*

*"It must have been Macavity!"—but he's a mile away.*

*You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs,*

*Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.*

*Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,*

*There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.* 35

*He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:*

*At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!*

*And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds  
are widely known*

*(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention  
Griddlebone)* 40

*Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all  
the time*

*Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of  
Crime!*

## BALLAD

Charles Stuart Calverley

## PART I

*The auld wife sat at her ivied door,  
 (Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
 A thing she had frequently done before;  
 And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.*

*The piper he piped on the hilltop high, 5  
 (Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
 Till the cow said, "I die," and the goose asked  
 "Why?"  
 And the dog said nothing, but searched for fleas.*

*The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;  
 (Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese) 10  
 His last brew of ale was a trifle hard,  
 The connection of which with the plot one sees.*

*The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;  
 (Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
 She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies, 15  
 As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.*

*The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;  
 (Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*

*If you try to approach her away she skips  
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.* 20

*The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;  
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,  
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.*

## PART II

*She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled  
cheeks,* 25  
*(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks  
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.*

*She sat with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks;  
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)* 30  
*And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;  
Then she followed him out o'er the misty leas.*

*Her sheep followed her, as their tails did them,  
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)  
And this song is considered a perfect gem;* 35  
*And as to the meaning, it's what you please.*

## KUBLA KHAN

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
 Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
 Through caverns measureless to man  
     Down to a sunless sea. 5  
 So twice five miles of fertile ground  
 With walls and towers were girdled round:  
 And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
 And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10  
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.*

*But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15  
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
 And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seeth-  
     ing,  
 As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
 A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:  
 Amid whose swift half intermitted burst 20  
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,*

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
 And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
 It flung up momentarily the sacred river.  
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion      25  
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:  
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
 Ancestral voices prophesying war!      30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
 Floated midway on the waves;  
 Where was heard the mingled measure  
 From the fountain and the caves.  
 It was a miracle of rare device,      35  
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer  
 In a vision once I saw:  
 It was an Abyssinian maid,  
 And on her dulcimer she played,      40  
 Singing of Mount Abora.  
 Could I revive within me  
 Her symphony and song,  
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
 That with music loud and long,      45  
 I would build that dome in air,

*That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.*

50

# THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S SONG

from IOLANTHE

William S. Gilbert

When you're lying awake with a dismal headache,  
 and repose is taboo'd by anxiety,  
 I conceive you may use any language you choose to  
 indulge in without impropriety;  
 For your brain is on fire—the bedclothes conspire of  
 usual slumber to plunder you:  
 First your counterpane goes, and uncovers your toes,  
 and your sheet slips demurely from under you;  
 Then the blanketing tickles—you feel like mixed  
 pickles—so terribly sharp is the pricking,                    5  
 And you're hot, and you're cross, and you tumble  
 and toss till there's nothing 'twixt you and the  
 ticking.  
 Then the bedclothes all creep to the ground in a  
 heap, and you pick 'em all up in a tangle;  
 Next your pillow resigns and politely declines to re-  
 main at its usual angle!  
 Well, you get some repose in the form of a doze,  
 with hot eyeballs and head ever aching,  
 But your slumbering teems with such horrible



*dreams that you'd very much better be wak-  
ing;* 10

*For you dream you are crossing the Channel, and  
tossing about in a steamer from Harwich—*

*Which is something between a large bathing ma-  
chine and a very small second-class carriage—*

*And you're giving a treat (penny ice and cold meat)  
to a party of friends and relations—*

*They're a ravenous horde—and they all came on  
board at Sloane Square and South Kensington  
Stations.*

*And bound on that journey you find your attorney  
(who started that morning from Devon);* 15

*He's a bit undersized, and you don't feel surprised  
when he tells you he's only eleven.*

*Well, you're driving like mad with this singular lad  
(by-the-bye the ship's now a four-wheeler),*

*And you're playing round games, and he calls you  
bad names when you tell him that "ties pay the  
dealer";*

*But this you can't stand, so you throw up your hand,  
and you find you're as cold as an icicle,*

*In your shirt and your socks (the black silk with gold  
clocks), crossing Salisbury Plain on a bicycle:* 20

*And he and the crew are on bicycles too—which  
they've somehow or other invested in—*

*And he's telling the tars all the particulars of a company he's interested in—*

*It's a scheme of devices, to get at low prices, all goods from cough mixtures to cables*

*(Which tickled the sailors) by treating retailers, as though they were all vegetables—*

*You get a good spademan to plant a small tradesman (first take off his boots with a boot-tree), 25*

*And his legs will take root, and his fingers will shoot, and they'll blossom and bud like a fruit-tree—*

*From the green-grocer tree you get grapes and green-pea, cauliflower, pineapple, and cranberries,*

*While the pastrycook plant, cherry brandy will grant, apple puffs, and three-corners, and Banburys—*

*The shares are a penny, and ever so many are taken by Rothschild and Baring,*

*And just as a few are allotted to you, you awake with a shudder despairing— 30*

*You're a regular wreck, with a crick in your neck, and no wonder you snore, for your head's on the floor, and you've needles and pins from your soles to your shins, and your flesh is a-creep, and your left leg's asleep, and you've cramp in your toes, and a fly on your nose, and some fluff in your lung, and a feverish tongue, and a thirst that's*

*intense, and a general sense that you haven't been sleeping in clover;*

*But the darkness has passed, and it's daylight at last, and the night has been long—ditto, ditto my song—and thank goodness they're both of them over!*

## THE STORY OF PRINCE AGIB

William S. Gilbert

*Strike the concertina's melancholy string!*  
*Blow the spirit-stirring harp like anything!*  
*Let the piano's martial blast*  
*Rouse the echoes of the past,*  
*For of Agib, Prince of Tartary, I sing!* 5

*Of Agib, who, amid Tartaric scenes,*  
*Wrote a lot of ballet-music in his teens:*  
*His gentle spirit rolls*  
*In the melody of souls—*  
*Which is pretty, but I don't know what it means.* 10

*Of Agib, who could readily, at sight,*  
*Strum a march upon the loud Theodolite.*  
*He would diligently play*  
*On the Zoetrope all day,*  
*And blow the gay Pantechnicon all night.* 15

*One winter— I am shaky in my dates—*  
*Came two starving Tartar minstrels to his gates;*  
*Oh, Allah be obeyed,*  
*How infernally they played!*

*I remember that they called themselves the  
"Oüaits."* 20

*Oh! that day of sorrow, misery, and rage,  
I shall carry to the Catacombs of Age,  
Photographically lined  
On the tablet of my mind,  
When a yesterday has faded from its page!* 25

*Alas! Prince Agib went and asked them in;  
Gave them beer, and eggs, and sweets, and scent,  
and tin;  
And when (as snobs would say)  
They had "put it all away,"  
He requested them to tune up and begin.* 30

*Though its icy horror chill you to the core,  
I will tell you what I never told before—  
The consequences true  
Of that awful interview,  
For I listened at the keyhole in the door!* 35

*They played him a sonata—let me see!  
"Medulla oblongata"—key of G.  
Then they began to sing  
That extremely lovely thing,  
"Scherzando! ma non troppo, ppp."* 40

He gave them money, more than they could count,  
 Scent from a most ingenious little fount,  
     More beer in little kegs,  
     Many dozen hard-boiled eggs,  
 And goodies to a fabulous amount.

45

Now follows the dim horror of my tale,  
 And I feel I'm growing gradually pale;  
     For even at this day,  
     Though its sting has passed away,  
 When I venture to remember it, I quail!

50

The elder of the brothers gave a squeal,  
 All-overish it made me for to feel.

    "O Prince," he says, says he,  
     "If a Prince indeed you be,  
 I've a mystery I'm going to reveal!

55

"Oh, listen, if you'd shun a horrid death,  
 To what the gent who's speaking to you saith:

    No 'Oiiaits' in truth are we,  
     As you fancy that we be,  
 For (ter-remble!) I am Aleck—this is Beth!"

60

Said Agib, "Oh! accursed of your kind,  
 I have heard that ye are men of evil mind!"  
     Beth gave a dreadful shriek—

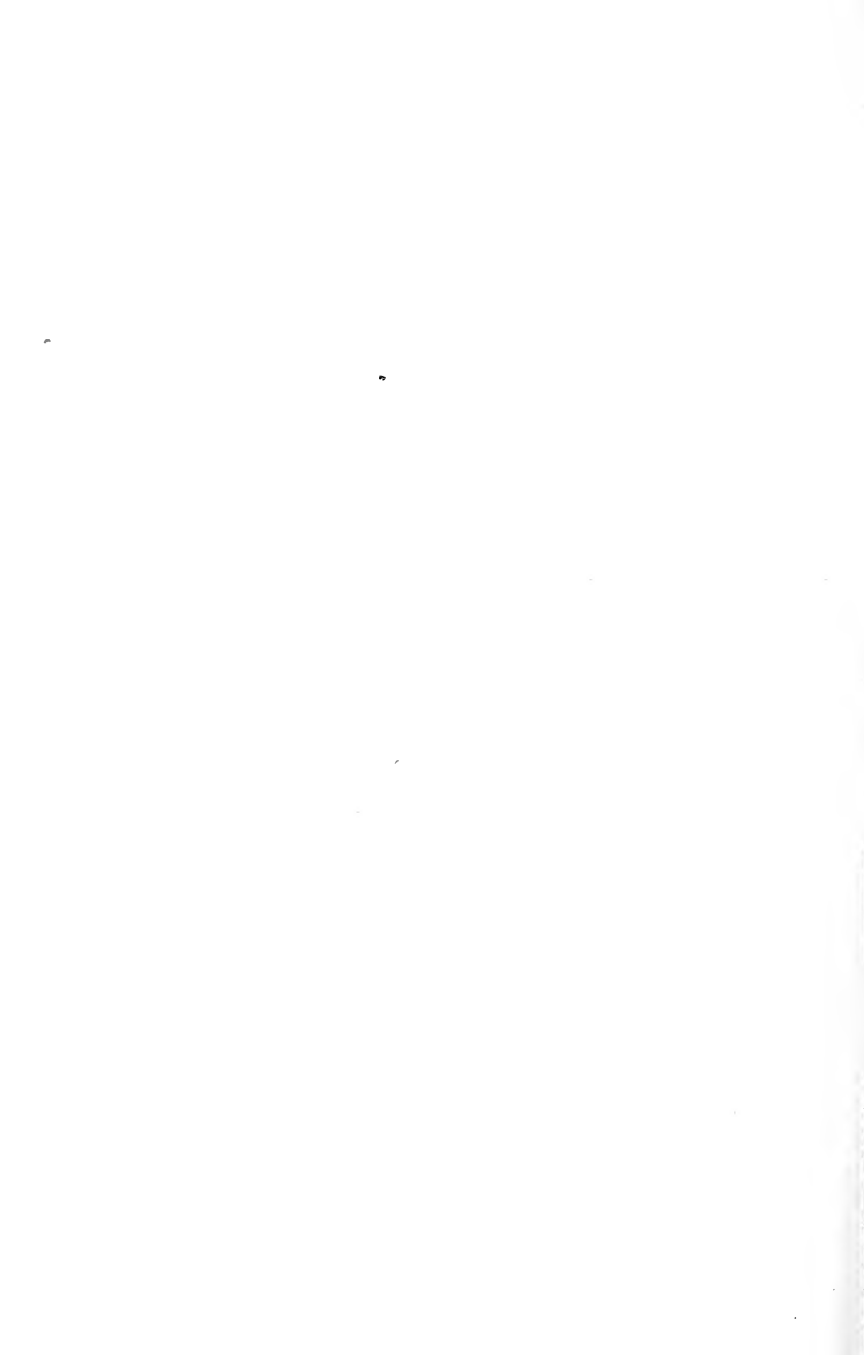
But before he'd time to speak  
 I was mercilessly collared from behind. 65

In number ten or twelve, or even more,  
 They fastened me, full length, upon the floor.  
     On my face extended flat,  
     I was walloped with a cat,  
 For listening at the keyhole of a door. 70

Oh! the horror of that agonizing thrill!  
 (I can feel the place in frosty weather still.)  
     For a week from ten to four  
     I was fastened to the floor,  
 While a mercenary wopped me with a will! 75

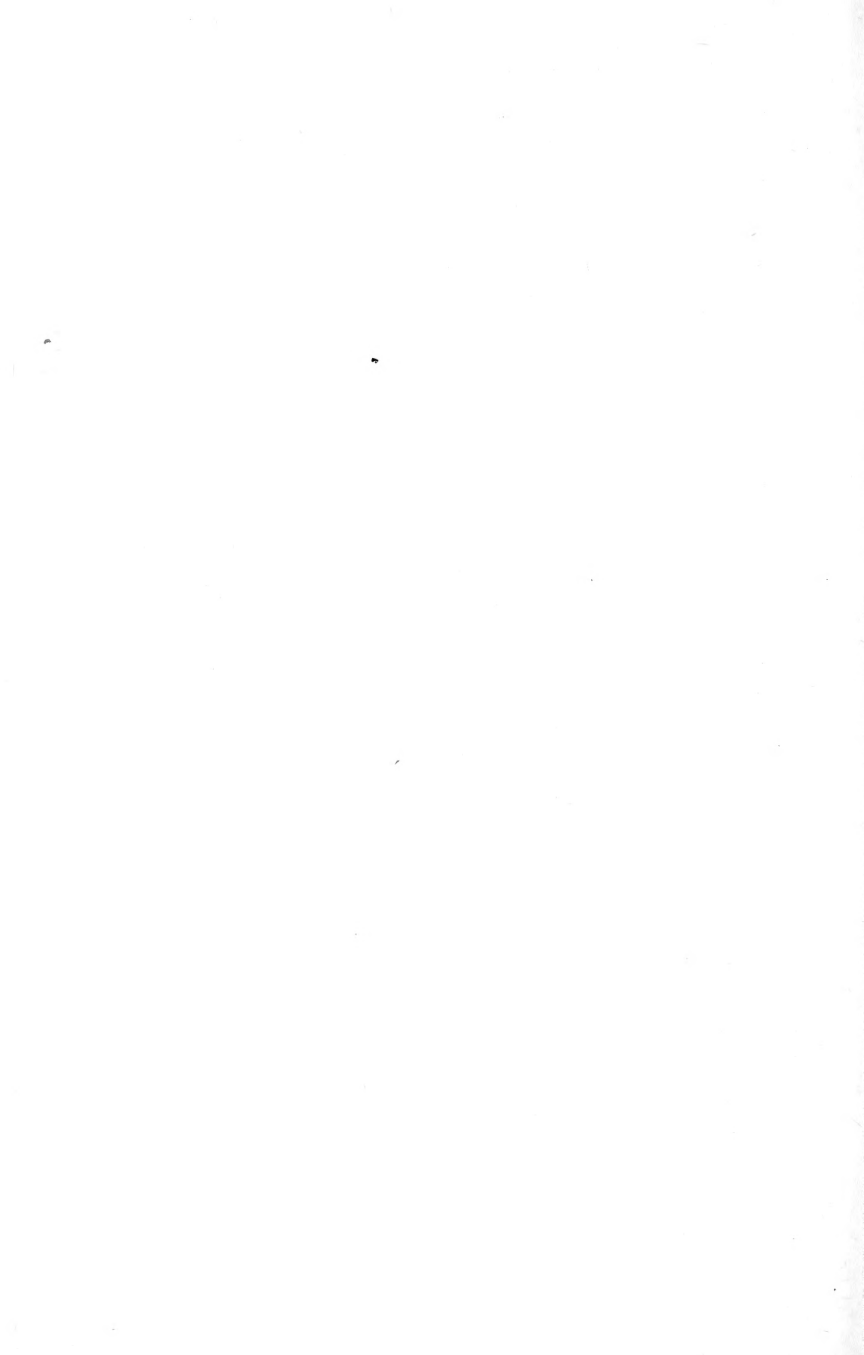
They branded me and broke me on a wheel,  
 And they left me in an hospital to heal;  
     And upon my solemn word,  
     I have never, never heard  
 What those Tartars had determined to reveal. 80

But that day of sorrow, misery, and rage,  
 I shall carry to the Catacombs of Age,  
     Photographically lined  
     On the tablet of my mind,  
 When a yesterday has faded from its page! 85





# NOTES ON THE POEMS



NOTES ON *Sir Patrick Spens* (Pages 3-4)

Line 9: *braid*, broad

Line 30: *schoone*, shoes

Line 34: *kems*, combs

The student should read this poem aloud to fix the rhythm firmly in his mind. It is impossible to read this poem without finding that the stanzas all fall into the same pattern, a very strong one, with four stressed syllables in the first and third lines and three stressed syllables in the second and fourth lines. The second and fourth lines also rhyme. This meter is usually called ballad meter because it is used in the greater number of English and Scottish ballads. It is a dominating rhythm, as the student who reads all the way through the poem and then returns to the first stanza will discover, for no matter how he accented the word *sailor* the first time through, he will put the accent on the second syllable after he has once read the poem; that is, the rhythm is strong enough to force him to mispronounce a word slightly in order to make it fit in.

Typical also of the ballad is the way the story is told by indirection. As much information as possible is presented directly to the reader in dialogue and in little scenes. Each incident is made as swiftly vivid as possible by the addition of details, such as the blood-red wine the king is drinking (a detail giving a notion of the lightness with which the king decides matters affecting the lives of others) and the combs in the hair of the proud ladies (fit consorts for the nobles who were loth to wet their cork-heeled shoes).

NOTES ON *The Griesly Wife* (Pages 5-6)

Title: *griesly*, grisly, uncanny

Line 14: *scree*, a heap of stones or rocky debris

Line 19: *dingoes*, wild dogs

This modern ballad shows the continuing effectiveness of the form, how well it can still be used to tell a story. The poem was published in 1946, but there is little to suggest any particular age or time to which it would have to belong. The single word *dingoes* suggests, correctly, that its author is Australian. Like the author of "Sir Patrick Spens," he is not afraid of mis-accenting a word in order to give variation and emphasis to a line. Look especially at line 39 for its rhythm, and note that the last line of the poem also is very free.

NOTES ON *The Haystack in the Floods* (Pages 7-13)

Line 9: *kirtle kilted*, skirt tucked up.

Line 36: *pennon*, the knight's banner or standard, here with three running lions upon it.

Line 42: *coif*, a tight-fitting headdress.

Line 45: *Poictiers*, a battle in 1356, where the English defeated the French, who outnumbered them.

Line 47: *Gascon frontier*, Gascony was then held by the English, so that Robert and Jehane would have been safe if they could have crossed.

Line 52: *Chatelet*, one of the prisons of Paris.

Line 56: *swim*, women accused of witchcraft were flung into water. In an age when swimming was unusual, it was believed that if

the woman stayed alive, she was a witch, aided by the devil; if she drowned, she was proved innocent and her soul was saved.

Line 61: "*St. George for Marny!*" Robert de Marny calls on the patron saint of the English.

Line 72: *paramour*, lover.

Line 139: *mail*, armor.

Line 153: *fitte*, section of a story, chapter.

All the information needed for the understanding of the poem is contained in the verse itself, but there are a few points to notice in Morris' telling of the story. The events are seen almost completely from Jehane's vision. The rest of the characters and their emotions are not fully explored as are hers. Also, Morris manages the time element very skillfully. Where does the story move most swiftly? Where is the moment of action expanded? By what means does Morris make his verse move swiftly or slowly?

#### NOTES ON SELECTION FROM *The Prelude* (Pages 14-15)

Line 23: *As if with voluntary power instinct*, as if it had will-power of its own.

This little section of a very much longer poem is included among the poems of adventure, not because there are actions of great violence or clashes of personality, but because of the power that a slight action has exerted on the poet's mind. The feeling of being pursued for his theft of the boat is as strong as if he had been pursued by witches, perhaps even a stronger feeling since here it is the whole of nature and not just one supernatural force which is threatening him. How does Wordsworth get his effect of being

haunted, overpowered by his surroundings? What words would you pick out as especially effective? Note the use of *huge* in line 22 and in line 42, with the effect of reducing the human figure to tiny proportions.

#### NOTES ON *First Travels of Max* (Pages 16-19)

Line 32: *casuistical*, able to find reasons for doing what he wants to do anyway.

Line 45: *Bashan*, a Biblical kingdom, whose fat bulls are mentioned in the Psalms.

On the surface this poem tells only a children's story, of an imaginative child who sneaks off into the woods and comes back. But it is not the same child who comes back; something important has happened to him. In a different sense, the poet is saying that something has happened to all of us, that everyone finds it necessary to sneak away from security ("A great house is Van Vrooman") in search of danger in a Fool's Forest, and that we are all of us apt to return having merely threatened to come back later and cut off the heads of any witches we have encountered. Little Max Van Vrooman has something in him of the character Lewis Carroll describes in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*: "'I'm very brave generally,' he went on in a low voice: 'only today I happen to have a headache.'"

#### NOTES ON *She Walks in Beauty* (Page 26)

This simple and charming song belongs to the same style and period as "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" and many other graceful lyrics intended to be set to music and to be sung. It is frankly sentimental, the sort of thing that lovers (if they have the skill) have written

for ages and will continue to write. Byron's is more skillful than most, and underneath its apparent simplicity lies the strength of good poetic construction. Not only is the rhythm melodic, but the imagery of the opening lines prepares the reader for what is to come. The original comparison of the lady's beauty with a night of cloudless climes and starry skies leads naturally into the more detailed comparisons and the final statements of her virtues. The general effect of the poem is not a chance or haphazard one but the result of intelligent workmanship.

#### NOTES ON *Sonnet 30* (Page 27)

The sonnet form is one of the most exact of the common patterns of poetry. Shakespeare uses this same pattern in one hundred fifty-four poems so successfully that this variety of sonnet is regularly termed "Shakespearean." Any careful reader can derive the form from this example by looking over the poem a number of times. There are always fourteen lines of ten syllables each, with an accent falling on the second of each pair of syllables. (Technically these are called iambic pentameter lines and are the most usual form of poetic writing in English.) The fourteen lines are divided into four sections, three of four lines each, with a final pair or couplet. The three four-line divisions have the same sort of rhyme schemes and are arranged to be roughly parallel in thought. Notice, for instance, that the first twelve lines are all one sentence, but that heavy punctuation divides line 4 from line 5 and line 8 from line 9. Further than that, Shakespeare has arranged guide words to make his design clearer: *When* in line 1 is answered by *then* in lines 5 and 9. The final couplet acts as a sort of

string around the package and ties up the thought neatly.

The figure of speech suggested by *sessions* in the opening line refers to the "sessions" of a law court and helps to establish the imagery of the poem, which depends quite largely on legal and business terms. What other words suggest the same notion?

#### NOTES ON "Sonnet" from *Astrophel and Stella* (Page 28)

Like the previous poem, this is a sonnet. It is, however, an "Italian" one rather than a Shakespearean one. Look at the difference in the rhyme pattern to see the swiftest method of telling an "Italian" sonnet (so-called because it follows the Italian models more closely) from other types. You will notice that there are only two rhyme-sounds used in the first eight lines, and that they are arranged in a different order from the alternate rhymes of the Shakespearean form. The two types of sonnet are used for slightly different purposes. As was suggested in the notes to the previous sonnet, the scheme there is to arrange three groups of four lines each, roughly parallel with each other, and then to sum them up with a two-line comment. Here the rhyme scheme indicates that the first eight lines are to be taken as a unit of thought, and in most effective Italian sonnets this is what happens. A situation or an attitude of mind is stated in the opening eight lines, and the comment is made in the remaining six. Apply this standard to your analysis of Sidney's poem. To whom is he talking in the poem? Why? What is he saying in the opening eight lines? How does it differ from what he says in the remaining six?



NOTES ON *When I was Fair and Young* (Pages 35-36)

Line 11: *Fair Venus' son*, Cupid

The theme of this poem is an old and a conventional one, so that the interest lies in the treatment of the subject rather than in the subject itself. Any well-educated young man or woman of Elizabeth's time was expected to be able to turn out acceptable verse of this sort. Would you give Elizabeth a passing mark for this? Where are there signs that she was having a little trouble making the rhythm flow evenly and easily?

NOTES ON *The Lover Showeth How He Is Forsaken of Such As He Sometime Enjoyed* (Page 37)

Line 12: *she*, tradition claims that Wyatt was one of the lovers of Queen Anne Boleyn, wife of Henry VIII.

Line 16: *gentleness*, gentlemanliness.

This is the oldest of the poems in this collection, and it occasionally shows that some allowance must be made for age. For example, in line 9 the word *especial* must be pronounced as four syllables, the way it was pronounced in Wyatt's time. The poem is carefully constructed in three stanzas, with a rather complicated rhyme scheme, each stanza having its own subject, but connected with the others. What is the basic comparison in the first stanza? Does it seem suitable?

Compare this poem with the one by Queen Elizabeth, which precedes it. The two poets are writing on opposite sides of the same question; the man or woman forsaken in love. Which is the more successful? Which one seems

more personal and manages to involve the reader more closely in the experience?

#### NOTES ON *Love Is a Sickness* (Page 38)

Line 11: *Jove*, Roman supreme deity, more often called Jupiter.

The whole pattern of thought in this song is paradoxical; that is, the poet is interested in stating and juxtaposing the apparent contradictions which the single emotion involves. How many such paradoxes can you discover? Is the tone serious or jesting? On what specific words do you base your answer?

#### NOTES ON *Stanzas on Woman* (Page 39)

What is the difference between the tone of this poem and that of the previous one, "Love Is a Sickness"? How is the difference in tone and effect achieved? In answering, try to analyze what difference is made by the choice of rhythm, by the use or absence of swift paradoxes. Goldsmith is carefully building to his final statement of death as a consequence of sin, and his method is to use terms of greater and greater intensity. (Starting with *folly*, he goes on to *melancholy*, *guilt*, and *shame* before he climaxes the sequence with *to die*.) Do you notice any similar building up in "Love Is a Sickness"?

#### NOTES ON *Music I Heard* (Page 41)

Here again a poet is illustrating very clearly a trait of the human mind which seems complicated only when one tries to state it abstractly. One recognizes immediately that

the poem arises from one man's experience and that the experience has echoes for all of us. But how would you state the general experience?

#### NOTES ON *My Last Duchess* (Pages 42-44)

The story here is told to us by one of the chief characters, some indefinite length of time after the main events have occurred. There are careful character sketches of both the Duchess and, less obviously, the Duke, who is talking. Do you agree when (in line 36) the Duke says that he has no skill in speech? What is the occasion of his telling the story at all? Does his telling of the faults of his last duchess suggest anything about the requirements for the new one? To whom is he talking?

The poem is told in rhymed couplets, but Browning has taken great care to see that the poem does not break up into small units of two lines each but flows steadily on, as the Duke's natural speech flows. This effect is achieved by making the heavy stops fall in the middle of the lines, instead of at the end of couplets, that is, by fixing a difference between the stops required by the sense and the stops required by the rhythm. If these two sorts of stops coincided, the poem would move very differently.

#### NOTES ON "Song" from *The Princess* (Page 48)

Line 7: *Danaë*. In Greek legend, Zeus wooed Danaë and eventually found that the only way he could approach her was to turn himself into a golden shower.

How realistic is this poem in its description? Compare it with Wordsworth's "Written in March" and notice how the

details which are successful in that poem would be completely out of place here. How does the rhythm contribute to the effect of the poem? What effect does the repeated *Now* have in lines 1, 5, 7, 9, and 11?

#### NOTES ON *There's a Certain Slant of Light* (Page 50)

This brief poem is deceptively simple. The comparisons of the afternoon light with other things that may affect us are very swift and very penetrating. The poem is given added unity by the return in the final stanza to the figure of speech which had opened the poem, the comparison of light with sound. At first the light had been like a sound in our human ears; at the end, it is like a sound which influences the very landscape about us. The wording of the poem is extremely precise. What effect on the entire poem does the use of such a word as *imperial* (line 11) have?

#### NOTES ON *Stream and Sun at Glendalough* (Page 51)

When a man tells you what the weather is like, he is apt to be telling you how he feels toward the world at the moment. The man who tells you that the sky is a wonderful blue is also suggesting his own reactions. Yeats has a special reason for thinking about repentance (line 6) at Glendalough, for the little valley with two lakes connected by a stream is the site of St. Kevin's Church, a ruined shrine, where one is supposed to pray with a sincerely repentant heart (line 6) and undivided attention (line 5). Out of the simple conflict in Yeats' emotions he has made a poem.

NOTES ON *The Dark Morning* (Page 52)

Line 7: *Germany*. Merton was writing this poem during World War II.

As in the previous poem, "Stream and Sun at Glendalough," the actual weather is subordinated to the mood it accompanies. Here Merton is giving us little more detail of the external world than we could have gotten from the title, certainly no wealth of description like that in Wordsworth's "Written in March." But we know far more directly the complex emotions of the poet.

This is the least "regular" of the poems in this section, the least conventional in rhythm. Try reading the poem aloud to see the places in which shifts of rhythm accompany shifts of thought. What do you think of the rhymes?

NOTES ON *To Autumn* (Page 53)

This poem, written with a choice of words so simple that none needs to be explained, is extremely subtle in its design, in the pattern of sounds, in the selection of images. Analyze it as carefully as you can, using the following questions as a guide. Where is Autumn first suggested as a person? How soon does this figure seem human? Does the emphasis in the poem stay upon this figure (personification) of Autumn? Where does the shift come in? Can you suggest a reason for the change? Examine the rather complicated verse form and rhyme scheme of each stanza. How does so complicated a rhyme scheme help to unify each stanza? What descriptive details in the poem are so typical of autumn that they could not be used for any other season?

NOTES ON *Neutral Tones* (Page 57)

Hardy's whole method here is to illustrate how an emotion becomes associated so closely with an object that the recollection of the emotion will cause one to summon up and visualize the object once more. This process, and the reverse of it (having the sight of an object call up the emotions with which the object has previously been associated), are part of the basic vocabulary of poetry. This is one of the ways in which metaphor works, so that poetry is able to build up a complex series of emotions through speaking in symbols. Here Hardy's central character has learned to put a whole series of images in the same cluster of emotions: "Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree, And a pond edged with grayish leaves." Each of the items listed here shares certain qualities with the others; the face has already been characterized ("The smile on your mouth was the *deadest* thing"), and the rest of the scene has certainly been made lifeless. In going over the poem, try to find the details which point toward the statement in the final lines. How has each of the items been prepared for its place in the list?

NOTES ON *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*  
(Pages 58-59)

This is propaganda, of a kind which only poetry seems able to carry on successfully. Lindsay is interested in the historical Lincoln, in what value the historical figure can have as a living and effective symbol for our own times. This poem was written at the beginning of World War I, and the thought is still effective because it deals with a situation which has persisted. A few of the references have

begun to age; for example, a poet writing now might not mention *dread-naughts* and might cite dictators rather than kings as murderers (line 29). Nevertheless, the basic contrast of the poem holds good: the contrast between the permanent truths, represented by the lonely and troubled spirit of Lincoln, no matter how quaint and old-fashioned, and the busy purposelessness of the actual world.

#### NOTES ON *Birches* (Pages 60-62)

This poem may seem a little easier to the reader if it is thought of as divided into two parts, between lines 40 and 41. The first section may be compared with the octave of a sonnet, the opening eight lines where a situation is stated. The remainder of the poem is like the sestet, or final six lines, in which the original situation is commented upon. What attitude toward life does Frost show here? The final line shows his refusal to indulge in easy moralizing.

#### NOTES ON *The Road Not Taken* (Page 63)

This poem is an excellent example of the way in which a simple statement can be loaded with extra meaning. When Frost commences the poem with the direct, factual statement that "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood," we accept his words as meaning just exactly that and no more, the clear noting down of a geographical situation. By the time he has finished his poem, and has repeated his statement of the divergence of the two roads (line 18), we are no longer taking his statement as bare but as one with overtones of every sort. By that time, the reader should have asked himself whether this is the real woods through which Frost is walking, or whether it is both an actual and

a symbolic woods. The easy conversational tone of the poem should not hide the skill with which Frost is writing. Note that the first two and a half stanzas are made up of a single sentence, whose differences from prose, in wording and in rhythm, are part of the subtlety that goes into first-rate poetry.

#### NOTES ON *The Long Hill* (Page 64)

This poem has much of the same feeling as Frost's "The Road Not Taken." No extra meaning is insisted upon, but it lies there to be accepted or not as the reader chooses. The rhythmic variety of the poem is part of the effect of ease and informality. The second line of each stanza, for example, contains three stresses, but the unstressed syllables are arranged differently each time. The poet has substituted anapests (that is, two light syllables followed by a stress) where we would expect simple iambs (a single light syllable followed by a stress). The result is a relaxed feeling in the rhythm, which helps to give the impression that the poet is not insisting on the importance of this experience.

#### NOTES ON *when serpents bargain for the right to squirm* (Page 65)

e. e. cummings, whose own preferences in regard to capital letters are followed here, is a thorough-going individualist in many other ways, as this poem testifies. In form it is a Shakespearean sonnet, although the rhymes are "off" ones. The form is explained fully in the notes to "Sonnet 30" (page 27), with which cummings' poem may be compared.



NOTES ON *On Reading the War Diary of a Defunct Ambassador* (Pages 66-67)

Line 11: "*the guns*," the guests at an aristocratic shooting party, characteristic of the highest European society before World War I.

Line 37: *kept Europe safe for Perpetuity*. Sassoon is referring here to the statements about World War I. Both sides claimed that it was to preserve European culture and tradition. President Woodrow Wilson said, "The world must be made safe for democracy."

The fact that Sassoon never tells us to which side the Ambassador belonged adds to the irony of the situation. The whole poem is a bitter indictment of a governing class which could not maintain peace, reaching its ironic climax in the statement that Sassoon is *overjoyed* (line 32).

The form of the poem is deceptively simple. The stanzas are not alike in their construction, neither in number of lines nor in the pattern of rhyme, and the final stanza serves as a kind of summary and climax in form as well as in meaning.

NOTES ON *The Unknown Citizen* (Pages 68-69)

This poem should be read aloud if it is to have its full effect, because the way in which the verse moves is part of Auden's meaning. In most of the poems already read in this book, the author has chosen a fairly regular form, departing from it only for fairly minor variations. Here one's first reaction might be that the rhythms are too prosaic part

of the time, and only lamely poetical the rest; for example, lines 4 and 5 *might* be cited as prosaic, and lines 6 and 7 *might* be called lame. On the other hand, the final lines of the poem demonstrate that Auden is able to do very much what he wishes with rhythms, for he ends his poem with a crisply ironic comment. The problem then for the reader is to attempt to see just how the somewhat eccentric form of the poem, with its helter-skelter rhyme scheme, is related to what the poem is saying. What would your answer to the problem be?

#### NOTES ON *The Spring Potomac* (Pages 70-71)

The best way of attacking this poem is to start from the exact physical situation of the poet. What is he doing? He has gone fishing in the Potomac River just outside Washington in the spring, and he wonders suddenly about his own situation, his relation to the world around him, and the fact that he, like other men, has come out fishing. In a way, he feels, he has been joining in a sort of spring ceremony, like a religious ritual, for the renewal of strength. What is the form of the poem? What is the rhyme scheme? Do you notice any off-rhymes (words with similar sounds but not exactly the same endings)? Why, in line 17, is the river called *medicinal*? Have you been prepared for such an adjective by anything earlier in the poem?

#### NOTES ON *All But Blind* (Page 75)

Like Frost's "The Road Not Taken," this poem illustrates how a simple factual statement can take on overtones. The three situations which De la Mare lines up in parallel stanzas here have suggested a meaning above and beyond

themselves before the fourth stanza makes the definite statement. Would the poem have been more or less effective without the final stanza?

#### NOTES ON *Dover Beach* (Pages 76-77)

For the first twenty-eight lines of this poem, Matthew Arnold is busy investigating the overtones of a particular situation in which he has found himself, just as Frost was interested in the two roads that diverged in a yellow wood. Arnold makes his comparison much more openly, and works it out thoroughly until he abandons it and turns from it in the final section of the poem. Notice that he finds only one point of rest in the whole poem, which is filled with images of motion and disturbance. What is that point of rest?

#### NOTES ON *In Westminster Abbey* (Pages 78-79)

Line 2: *vox humana*, one of the stops on an organ.

Line 20: *Boots'*, a large rental library organization.

This war-time poem may be classed as a dramatic monologue in the same way that Browning's "My Last Duchess" is so classed, since in each case the reader learns a great deal about the person speaking. Here, in skillful light verse, is a satirical portrait of a woman who is completely oblivious to what religion might mean and who has reduced it to a series of conventional attitudes. Where in the poem is it first made clear that she is a trivial person? Note instances where a satiric effect is made by putting two unlike things on the same level of importance.

NOTES ON *Richard Cory* (Page 83)

This poem, like so many of Robinson's, deals with the difference between what a man thinks of himself and what the world thinks of him, the secret tragedy of the individual. Part of the effect is gained by having the observer somewhat insensitive, by his being simply a witness of events, representing the town's opinions. How much effect is achieved by such a word as *glistened*?

NOTES ON *Lucy Gray; or Solitude* (Pages 84-86)

Line 19: *minster*, church.

This poem is a ballad, and has the same sound pattern as has "Sir Patrick Spens," along with an additional rhyme in each verse. In the earlier ballad, only the second and fourth lines rhymed in each stanza; here the first line is rhymed with the third, also. But this is not a traditional poem, passed from singer to singer until finally written down; this ballad was written by a poet who wanted to imitate the old ballads and yet introduce a new quality. He called his poems on this model *lyrical ballads*, since he wished to emphasize an emotional quality, a feeling, which would be more important than the actual story told, the element which had been most important in the traditional ballads. To what extent has he succeeded? After comparing this poem with "Sir Patrick Spens" and with "Barbara Allen," decide how much it owes to the old forms and how much of it is new.

NOTES ON *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal* and *The Night Is Freezing Fast* (Pages 87 and 88)

"A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" and "The Night Is Freezing Fast" are obviously on the same subject and even end with the same figure of speech. But, just as obviously, the two poets feel differently toward their subject; there are different attitudes toward the person who has died. Analyze the poems thoroughly to find where the similarities and the differences lie.

NOTES ON *I Wage Not Any Feud* (Page 89)

Line 14: *garners*, stores up, as one stores up grain after a harvest.

This is the eighty-second poem in the long series of poems which Tennyson wrote after the death of his friend Arthur Hallam. Note the personification of Death in the first and the eighth line, where Death becomes a living, acting force. How effective do you find this? The basis of the poem is a very sure faith in another and a better world, as indicated in lines 11 and 12. This "knowledge" prepares us to accept Tennyson's paradox in line 15, where he speaks of the "life" of a man who has been taken by Death.

NOTES ON "Song" from *Cymbeline* (Pages 90-91)

In the play (Act IV, Scene ii) this dirge is sung by two brothers, each singing one of the first two stanzas and then alternate lines of the remaining two, joining voices for the couplets at the end of stanzas three and four. There is an actual progression of thought through this little song, with

the lament moving from very common sensations, like "the heat o' the sun," to the abstractions of "joy and moan" and the final prayer for the safety of Fidele's soul in the last verse.

NOTES ON *When I Am Dead, My Dearest* (Page 92)

The rhythm of this poem reinforces the thought very successfully. The light, swiftly moving verses talk about death and express the attitude toward it which the poet states explicitly only later on in the poem. This effect is made possible partly by the choice of details associated with death. Notice that the more gruesome images which might have been used are omitted; there is nothing about winding-sheets or worms here to drag our notice to aspects of death which the poet does not wish us to think of. Part of the success of this poem also is its use of parallelism, not only in the contrast of the point of view between stanzas but also in the actual sentence structure within the stanzas themselves.

NOTES ON *Rizpah* (Pages 93-100)

Line 73: *Election, and Reprobation*. The old woman has heard these words in sermons and has only partly followed them. They refer to theories of who shall get into Heaven (*Election*) and who shall be turned away (*Reprobation*).

Like "My Last Duchess," this is a dramatic monologue. How soon do the outlines of the story become clear? What is the situation from which the mother is telling the story?

In what period does the story take place? Have the authorities been more cruel than would have been expected?

NOTES ON *Sonnet on His Deceased Wife* (Page 101)

Line 2: *Alcestis*. In the Greek legend Hercules, the son of Jove, came to visit his friend Admetus and found the house in mourning for Alcestis, the wife of Admetus. She had accepted death willingly in order that her husband might live, and Hercules descended to the underworld and forced Death to restore her to Admetus.

Line 6: *Old Law*. See the Bible, Leviticus xii, for the rules which were laid down for purification after childbirth.

Line 10: *veiled*. Milton was already blind in 1656, when he married Katharine Woodcock, his third wife, and consequently his imagined vision of her could not show him her face.

Line 14: *night*. See note above on Milton's blindness.

All sonnets have fourteen five-stress lines, but the two chief varieties, the Italian and the Shakespearean sonnets, differ in their rhyme scheme and the general pattern of thought. Milton has used here an adaptation of the Italian form, with only two rhymes in the *octave*, or first eight lines, and with those two rhymes spaced in a special pattern of a,b,b,a,a,b,b,a. The *sestet*, or final six lines, here has only two additional rhymes, instead of the three which are usual in the Italian sonnet.

NOTES ON "Dirge" from *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses for the Armor of Achilles* (Pages 102-103)

The theme of this poem is extremely simple. If it were stated in the fewest possible words, it would sound trite and even dull. But the poet has found decorations for his thought and has managed to cast an old truth into an attractive form. His problem is to make abstractions seem real and immediate to us, to carry us from the vague terms of the first two lines to the very concrete ones at the end of the poem. How does he accomplish this?

NOTES ON *Musée des Beaux Arts* (Pages 104-105)

The title means "Museum of Fine Arts." This poem has the most irregular form of all the poems in this section. The rhyme scheme is extremely indefinite, and one line (read the poem to see which) is left unrhymed and hanging. The choice of words, too, is colloquial and informal, but the surface tone of the poem should not trick the reader into supposing that the subject is not serious. Actually, the poem is extremely serious, since it concerns itself with our human attitude toward the suffering of others. The picture about which Auden talks in the second part of the poem is an actual one and has been reproduced in a good many books. The student may wish to look in the art section of the library for a copy, since the picture adds interest to the poem, although this, of course, is not necessary to a full understanding of the poem.



NOTES ON *Tarantella* (Pages 109-110)

What this poem says and hints at is nowhere near so important as how it says it. Close analysis will simply prove logically what every reader has felt the first time he has read the poem: that it is *light* verse, meant to amuse with its swing and lilt; that the rhymes are a little far-fetched, with some of the fun coming from the elaborate internal and double rhyming. Prose paraphrases of most poems are bad, but one of this would be disastrous.

NOTES ON *Young Gal's Blues* (Pages 111-112)

Like Belloc's "Tarantella," this poem depends chiefly upon its rhythm for its effect. It is almost impossible to read it without having some sort of tune come into one's head. But behind its apparent simplicity, there is a close organization, with the third stanza serving to summarize and unify the earlier two, and the fourth carrying on the thought to a new conclusion. Langston Hughes has managed here the difficult trick of reconciling humor and bitterness into a new whole, chiefly by the skillful use of rhythm.

NOTES ON *Macavity: The Mystery Cat* (Pages 113-116)

The Great Macavity steps straight from the pages of any detective novel or from a second-rate mystery movie. Compare the exploits of The Mystery Cat with those of your favorite sleuth. How close to the type does Macavity come? How seriously can you take any of the fictional detectives after reading Macavity?

NOTES ON *Ballad* (Pages 117-118)

What is being satirized here? Why is the poem in two parts? Pick out the usual ballad details which Calverley has carefully preserved. Comment upon the final line of the poem.

NOTES ON *Kubla Khan* (Pages 119-121)

"Kubla Khan" is certainly one of the most famous poems in the English language, and it remains one of the most puzzling, as well as one of the most fascinating. It is here included as light verse simply because it can be profitably considered as an exercise in rhythmic variations. One may say about this poem, quoting the last line of Calverley's "Ballad," "And as to the meaning, it's what you please."

NOTES ON *The Lord Chancellor's Song* (Pages 122-125)

There are a number of local allusions, an understanding of which is not absolutely necessary, but which may add to the enjoyment of the song.

Line 11: *Channel*, The English Channel.

Line 12: *bathing machine*, a small dressing room on wheels which can be rented for the day and placed as the patron demands.

Line 12: *carriage*, a railroad compartment.

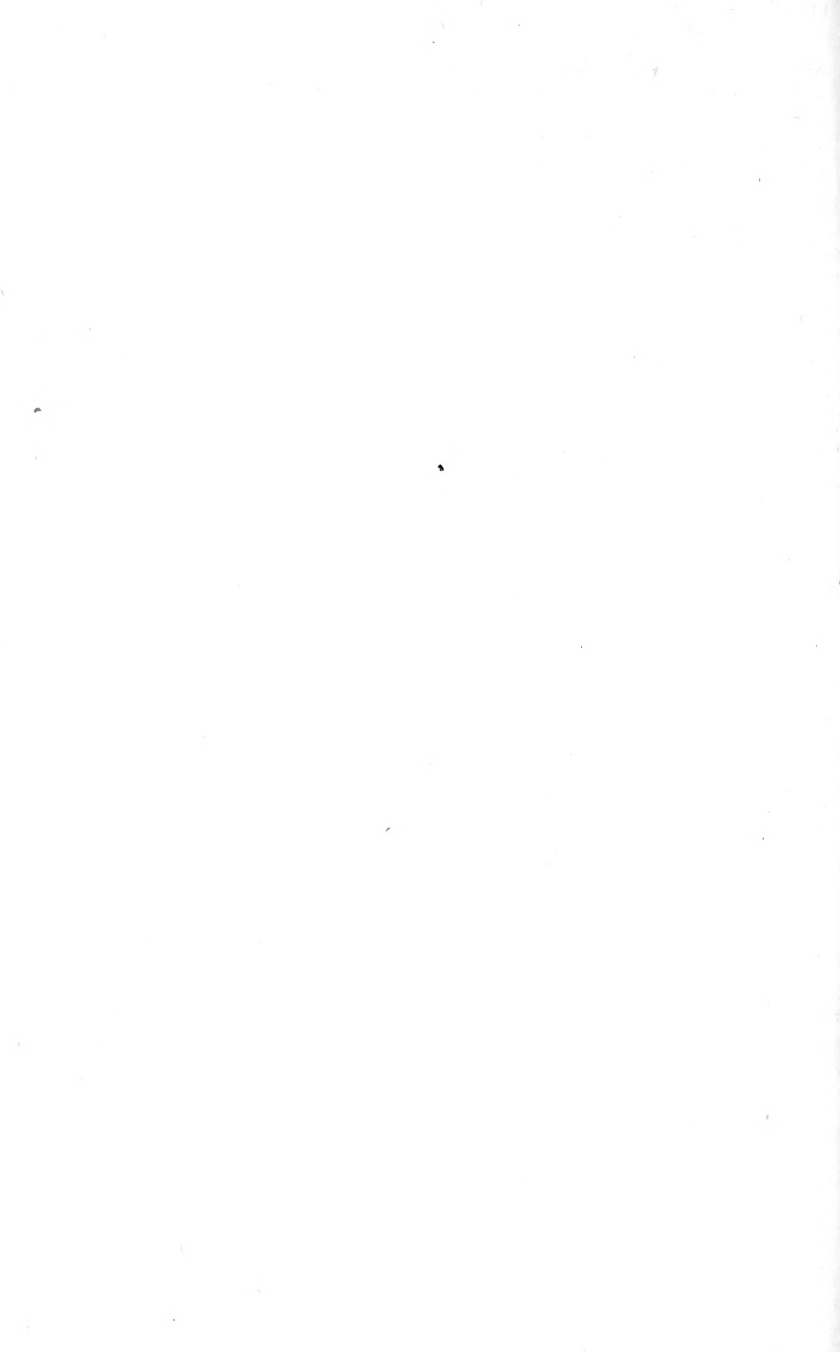
Line 14: *Sloane Square and South Kensington*, London stations.

Line 15: *Devon*, a county in the southwest of England.

- Line 17: *four-wheeler*, horse-drawn carriage.  
 Line 20: *Salisbury Plain*, large lonely plain in the south of England.  
 Line 25: *boots*, shoes.  
 Line 29: *Rothschild and Baring*, prominent London banking houses.  
 Line 31: Tradition demands that the actor who sings this song must do this entire line on a single breath.

#### NOTES ON *The Story of Prince Agib* (Pages 126-129)

Like most comic poems of any length, this work is rather uneven. Some of the jokes are a little old, some of them are perhaps over-simple, yet the vigorous rhythm and the fast and foolish action carry the reader along from one mock-heroic situation to the next. It is typical of Gilbert's humor that, after the long build-up of the two adventurers, the outcome is never revealed. There is no point in loading down a joke with explanations. The long terms in stanzas 3 and 8 are intended to be incomprehensible and out of place, carrying just enough meaning to let the reader know they are foolish. Two other references may be explained: *Oüaits* (line 20) is Gilbert's "oriental" spelling of *waits*, the name used for carol-singers who go from house to house at Christmas-time; the *cat* in line 69 is a cat-o'-nine-tails, or lash, rather than an animal—although in this poem it makes little difference.



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